The University of San Francisco
USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center

Doctoral Dissertations | Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects

2016

Counter-Narratives of Palestinian-American Youth: Resistance, Resilience and Transnational Identity

Kelly Delaney
University of San Francisco, kdelaneyrm9@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.usfca.edu/diss

 Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Delaney, Kelly, "Counter-Narratives of Palestinian-American Youth: Resistance, Resilience and Transnational Identity" (2016). *Doctoral Dissertations*. 346.
https://repository.usfca.edu/diss/346

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses, Dissertations, Capstones and Projects at USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of USF Scholarship: a digital repository @ Gleeson Library | Geschke Center. For more information, please contact repository@usfca.edu.

The University of San Francisco

COUNTER-NARRATIVES OF PALESTINIAN-AMERICAN YOUTH: RESISTANCE, RESILIENCE, AND IDENTITY

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

by
Kelly Delaney
San Francisco
May 2016

THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Dissertation Abstract

Counter-Narratives of Palestinian-American Youth:
Resistance, Resilience and Transnational Identity

This qualitative research study explores how students in Northern California public schools are navigating the space between being Palestinian and being American while preserving and reconstructing Palestinian cultural ties and traditions. It also examines the ways in which schools and educators can better support students in this process of negotiation and development of a positive transnational identity. Through the collection of counter-narratives, this research works to disrupt the Islamophobic dominant narrative that pervades the educational system and other institutions as well as the wider society in the United States.

The findings of this research include the identification of Islamophobia as a major impediment for positive, integrated identity development for Palestinian-American youth in Northern California. The data also suggests that while students are interested in a curriculum which better reflects the diversity of the students in an increasingly globalized world, of greater importance is the development of a critical mindset through the application of culturally sustaining pedagogies that enable students to learn to think more critically, be more open and inclusive, participate constructively in discussions, and take action to shift oppressive discourses and challenge systems of oppression.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee, approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

Kelly Delaney, Candidate	Date
Dr. Emma Fuentes, Chairperson	Date
Dr. Monisha Bajaj, Committee Member	Date
Dr. Sarah Capitelli, Committee Member	Date

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I have to thank my students and their families for agreeing to allow me to look through a window into their lives so that I and others might better understand their struggles and triumphs. Thank you so much to Dhalia, Nuha, Haneen, Aaron, Assim, Joseph and most especially to Layla, who kept the ship running and without whom none of this would have been possible. And thank you to all of my students throughout the years, I am honored to have been able to learn with you as your teacher.

To the faculty at USF, who constantly pushed me to dig deeper, work harder, and keep my eyes and my heart open to the truth, I am very grateful. Most especially to Dr. Emma Fuentes, and Dr. Shabnam Koirala-Azad, who showed me every day what kind of teacher I wanted to be. To Dr. Roberta Katz, for thinking my work was worthy of your book. And to Dr. Monisha Bajaj and Dr. Sarah Capitelli, members of my committee, who pushed me to work harder and do better, I thank you.

To my fellow classmates at USF who inspired me daily with the work they are doing and the brilliant people that they are. You all created an amazing space for the development of a critical mindset that revived my spirits and enabled me to push on to do the work every day. I must especially thank Amy Cipolla-Stickles, for believing in me, when I did not believe in myself and Assim Al-Khawaja, my brother, for reminding me to lead with my heart. Shukran. And to Belinda Arriaga, who shows me what it means to be a success in the love and grace she carries with her into every endeavor.

To my friends, Annie, Stephanie, Tammy and Johnna, who had to listen to constant complaining about how much work I was doing and put up with it tirelessly, I

am grateful. You are all amazing women that I want to be like when I grow up and I could not have finished without your endless friendship and support. Annie you are still the funniest person I have ever known in real life.

And most importantly, to my whole family, without whom I would not be the person that I am today—the good, the bad, and the ugly. To my dad John, who has always been one of my biggest cheerleaders, thank you for always being there to support me. To Luke and Molly, the best kids in the whole world, you bring such joy to my life, thank you for helping me to see what I was working for. And most importantly, to my mother Gail, there are no words that can describe how grateful I am to you for all you have done for me. Your entire life has been about taking care of other people and if I could be half the person you are I would consider myself a success. You are my favorite person, and I would be nothing without you. Thank you so much for being my mother.

Table of Contents

Part One: The Research Problem

Introduction

A war is coming. Imagine that you live in a small village and heard that a nearby town had been ransacked and destroyed and the men, women, children and the elderly in that town had been dragged into the street, lined up against a wall and slaughtered. You awake one morning to hear announcements that what happened in that town would be repeated in your village unless you leave now. But your family has lived on your land for hundreds of years. You do not want to leave, but a war is coming. You choose to protect your family and flee, locking the door to your home before you leave, believing you will return soon. Imagine someone else living in your home and working your land because you were never allowed to return.

This is the context that frames the Palestinian experience in the diaspora. Palestinians have been faced with perpetual refugee status and are often targeted in their host countries. In the United States, Palestinians have encountered racism and stereotyping along with many other communities of color. This presents challenges to Palestinian-American youth as they attempt to develop their own identity as both American and Palestinian. This qualitative study examined these challenges through counter-narratives of Palestinian-American youth living in the San Francisco Bay area. In an effort to avoid research that centers narratives of indigenous peoples in stories of pain and victimization, students were provided with the space to elucidate their individual and collective trials, but the emphasis of this research was to highlight their resistance, agency and resilience. Students discussed how the rich diversity of their experiences frame the development of a transnational identity and provide insights for educators

regarding how they might better support Palestinian-American youth in this process of positive identity development.

Background and Need for the Study

Between the years 1948 and 1967 750,000 Palestinians (more than 75% of the total population) were forced out of their homes into exile outside the borders of historic Palestine. Over 60 years later they still have not been allowed to return (Pappe, 2006; UNRWA, 2015). This forced displacement has led to the longest and largest refugee crisis in modern history, wherein almost half of all of the refugees in the world are Palestinian (UNHCR, 2011). Palestinians living under occupation in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank experience regular violations of their human rights. As in other settler colonial societies, Palestinians routinely experience the theft and destruction of their land, water and other resources (Barghouti, 2011; Pappe, 2006) along with the destruction of their homes (Halper, 2014). Israelis severely restrict Palestinians' freedom of movement, and illegally detain and imprison both adults and children (Abunimah, 2006; Cook, Hanieh & Kay, 2008; Defence for Children International, 2012) as well as restricting their freedom of speech and religious and cultural rights. The most recent Israeli assault on Gaza in the summer of 2014 resulted in the displacement of almost half a million Palestinians, which amounted to almost 25% of the population of Gaza and the deaths of over 1450 civilians, 490 of whom were children (UN, 2014). This wanton destruction is possibly the most vivid example of the dehumanization of Palestinians that has become so commonplace and normalized within the global discourse regarding Palestine.

And yet, the United Nations special rapporteur for the region has repeatedly condemned this untenable situation in reports, as has the General Assembly in the passage of resolutions (UN, 2007). Governments and people across the world have

called for an end to the occupation of Palestine by Israel with resolutions and massive demonstrations (Johnston & Khomami, 2014). International solidarity activists have compared the Israeli Occupation to the system of apartheid in South Africa (News24, 2014) and Palestinians have called for the international community to support a program of boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against the state of Israel (Barghouti, 2011) similar to the one that was supported by the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. It is this dual reality of dehumanization and invisibility along with activism and solidarity that informs the global discourse regarding the Occupation of Palestine.

Literature does exist relating the experiences of Palestinians living within the United States. However, much of that literature is focused on the experiences of college-aged youth (Bayoumi, 2008; Malek, 2011) or students on the East Coast (Abu El-Haj, 2007; Abu El-Haj, 2009; Abu El-Haj, 2011). Many of the narratives of young adults focus on challenges unique to the university or the world of work (Malek, 2011). And while there has been research on the experiences of Palestinian-American students living in New York City, this research describes students who often feel alienated from mainstream American culture and society and who strive to create a new kind of transnational identity. This is based in part on students involved in this research who have the ability to travel back and forth between Palestine and the United States as well as strong personal ties to Palestine.

In contrast, there is an ethos of inclusion and acceptance on the West Coast, particularly in Northern California, which while real, is also the means by which much of the worst abuses of Islamophobia and the targeting of Palestinian-American students is hidden. Because people in California know they should not be anti-Arab, many of the

institutional factors at play in the educational system that oppress and exclude Palestinian-American students are obscured by the rhetoric of equity. Moreover, many of the students in my community are not able to travel back to Palestine, or if they do, it is very infrequent. In addition, even if the circumstances surrounding students' lives were the same on the East and West Coast, there still would exist diversity within the population of Palestinian-American students. They are all different because of their wide range of experiences throughout their lives and the lives of their families since their exile from Palestine.

Statement of the Problem

Palestinians have been telling the world their stories for over 60 years. Accounts have been passed down to children and grandchildren within families. Dina Elmuti (2013) recounts the story of Deir Yassin. Her grandmother was nine years old when she lost 37 members of her family in the massacre at Deir Yassin. Israeli soldiers used the news of the massacre to terrorize other Palestinians into fleeing for their lives, facilitating the ethnic cleansing of the land that would later become Israel. Palestinian refugees in the diaspora have described the difficulties resulting from their forced displacement (Said, 2000). Edward Said's memoir details the unease he felt resulting from his exile because he never quite felt like he fit in anywhere. Other Palestinians in the United States have described their struggles with dual-identities and an American culture that is often hostile (Bayoumi, 2008; Malek, 2011). And countless Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories have described their challenges and resistance in print and electronic media of all kinds (Bisharat, 2012; IMEMC, 2014; Paq, 2014; Stohlman & Aladin, 2003; Voice of Witness, 2014). These accounts detail the Israeli attempts to strip them of their humanity but also vivid accounts of their efforts to resist the Occupation

and build solidarity with internationals from around the world (Barghouti, 2011; Stohlman & Aladin, 2003; Stop the Wall, 2015).

Unfortunately, this information is largely hidden from many in the United States due in large part to the history of Western colonialism and its modern incarnation of economic imperialism. According to Gramsci (2014), capitalism is maintained not simply by the legal and political system and the use of violence by police and the military, but ideologically through cultural institutions like schools, unions, churches and even families. Today, the commercial Western media, both news and entertainment media outlets, support the neoliberal capitalist policies that maintain cultural hegemony (Macedo, 2006). Neoliberal capitalism is an economic system based on the view that corporations and markets should be free of all government restrictions and oversight, and this system is maintained in large part through the corporatization of the media. The commercial news media, which is supposed to act as a check on both government and the private sector has now been completely co-opted by transnational corporations. Neoliberal hegemony is in part maintained by corporate media outlets that disseminate this worldview disguised as *common sense* (Macedo, 2006). One example of neoliberal hegemony disguised by the media as common sense is the discussion about the Occupation of Palestine by Israel. The corporate media controls the flow of information about the Occupation so that it seems as if Palestinians are always violent terrorists and Israelis are always their victims. The reality concerning the roots of the occupation and the history of Zionism as a settler colonial project (Khalidi, 2006) is eliminated from the discourse and replaced by a narrative about thousands of years of intractable conflict and a clash of cultures and civilizations (Abu El-Haj, 2015) along with the perception that

Israel was born out of a humanitarian impulse following the Holocaust (Pappe, 2004). A more complete history and context will be attempted in the following chapter, but currently this common sense understanding leads large numbers of people to support Israel as well as American companies that do business with Israel thus reinforcing the dominant paradigm at the expense of Palestinian human rights.

In an effort to justify their domination, Western colonial nations have often attempted to dehumanize indigenous peoples and cultures. The development of a false dichotomy of *us versus them* helped the West to rationalize its imperialism and continue its subjugation of indigenous people around the world (Said, 1978). Examples of this subjugation can be seen in the dehumanization of indigenous peoples and the purposeful destruction of cultures across the Americas by settler colonial powers from Europe beginning in the 16th century (Zinn, 2003). Additional examples include European imperialism in Africa (Fanon, 1963) and in U.S. policies in the 19th and 20th centuries favoring the support of puppet dictatorships around the world that would be loyal to U.S. corporate and governmental interests—even to the detriment of their own people (Gonzalez, 2011).

Similarly Israel, aligned with the West, has forced this colonial mentality on the Palestinian people (Pappé, 2006). Neoliberalism reproduces the dominant narrative of Palestinians, along with other Arabs and Muslims, as the *Other*, conflates and essentializes Palestinians and Islamic Fundamentalists and foments fears of terrorism (Said, 1978; Said, 1997). Moreover, the U.S. government continues to support Israel financially and militarily due in large part to the Israel lobby in Washington (Mearscheimer & Walt, 2008). The influence of the Israel lobby in U.S. politics, which

has made virtually any criticism of the Israeli colonial project synonymous with anti-Semitism (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2008) is another key factor in the dehumanization of the Palestinian people. Though most are not aware of the extent of their involvement, U.S. citizens and their tax dollars support the Israeli government and military—and thus the subjugation of the Palestinian people—through the huge cash payments, subsidies, and military assistance provided by the U.S. government. The most current numbers available show that the United States gives $8.5 million a day to Israel in monetary and military aid, amounting to $3.1 billion each year (Sharp, 2014).

Corporate media interests have manipulated and incited Islamophobia in the U.S. (Luyendijk, 2009; Said, 1997). van Driel (2004) defines Islamophobia as "an irrational distrust, fear or rejection of the Muslim religion and those who are (perceived as) Muslims" (p. x). Many elements underpin the Islamophobic master narrative. First, Arabs and Muslims are conflated when in fact many Palestinians are actually Christian and most Muslims in the world are not Arabs (Sensoy, 2009). Second, Muslims are seen as a monolithic and unchanging group of people who are all fundamentalists and terrorists (Shaheen, 2001), or at the very least hopelessly backwards and out of touch with modernity (Sensoy, 2009). Third, Arab and Muslim men and societies always oppress women, who are eternal victims in need of rescue and without agency (Marshall & Sensoy, 2011). This master narrative homogenizes the experiences of individuals and makes generalizations about an entire group of people based on the decontextualized actions of a small few. For example, when a Palestinian gets her children ready for school, goes to work, pays her taxes, and stops at the grocery store on her way home to make dinner for her family, she is seen as either invisible or an exception. When a

Palestinian fights for his people he is a terrorist, but when George Washington did it, he was a patriot and a freedom fighter. Context is everything. Cultural hegemony that is reinforced by the corporate media robs us of that context in favor of a skewed story that places people in the U.S. in direct conflict with all Palestinians.

The corporate news media in the United States—still the leading source of information for a large portion of people in this country—is rife with examples of Islamophobia. Said (1997) describes the essentialism promulgated by the media depicting Palestinians as terrorists who are all fundamentalist Muslims in contrast to Westerners who are enlightened purveyors of freedom and democracy. Even though some Americans do bad things, we are essentially a good people; while when some Palestinians do bad things, this is used as evidence of their inherent immorality and inferiority. Luyendijk (2009) echoes this point and argues that much of the problem lies with the choice of words used to describe a purportedly "objective" situation:

> Muslims who based their political orientation on their faith were "fundamentalists," whereas, in most Western media reports, an American presidential candidate with the same religious convictions would be labeled "evangelical" or "deeply religious." If that American won the election, almost nobody would say that Christianity was marching forwards; but when Muslims who were inspired in their politics by the Koran came out on top many a Western commentator would say that Islam was on the march. If an Arab leader clashed with a Western government, he was "anti-Western"; Western governments were never "anti-Arab" (p. 140).

Popular media plays a similar role in disseminating Islamophobia. Shaheen (2001) argues that the negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims are repeated so often in movies and television in the United States, to the almost total exclusion of any evidence to the contrary, that these negative images become reality for the vast majority of Americans. Stonebanks (2009) echoes this argument and notes not only the pervasiveness of stereotypes but also their persistence. For example, he refers to a news report about a Muslim schoolgirl in Canada who wanted to play sports while wearing her hijab, but after being told that this was prohibited she decided to fight this rule. Despite the fact that she was engaging in activities showcasing her agency (playing sports and fighting for her right to wear hijab), she was still described as someone in need of pity and rescue because of her backward religious beliefs (Stonebanks, 2009). The focus was on the girl's wearing hijab as an instrument of oppression of Muslim women and girls, and there is certainly a whole range of experiences relating to the wearing of the veil for Muslim women that includes the use of it as a tool of patriarchy. But often in Western countries, the wearing of hijab can be a sign of a woman's courage and independence and is sometimes done in contravention of the wishes of her family because of the danger of such an outward expression of Muslimness (Marshall & Sensoy, 2011). The media coverage also ignores the fact that the girl in the article who was fighting for her rights is an example of a Muslim woman with agency, which defies the stereotype of a veiled woman in need of saving by the West (Stonebanks, 2009).

This stereotyping and essentialism are reinforced by a corresponding lack of counter-narratives that show everyday Arabs and Muslims, both here and abroad, living their lives in an unremarkable and recognizably familiar fashion (Khan, 2009). The

diversity of experiences of what it means to be Arab, Muslim, or Palestinian is omitted from the master narrative. This point particularly applies to Palestinians, who are almost always depicted as terrorists and never as heroic men and women resisting a brutal occupation (Said, 1997). Given the history of racism and nativism in the U.S. (Takaki, 1993; Zinn, 2003), Palestinians suffer from the same xenophobic American worldview as have Indigenous Peoples, African-Americans, Chicanos, and other people of color.

Palestinians living in the U.S. also face the same pressures other immigrant groups encounter regarding identity, assimilation and transnationalism (Sensoy, 2009). The dominant American culture that is largely white and Western expects immigrants to conform and assimilate (Lee, 2005). While families also often emphasize assimilation, they still hope to maintain connections to cultural ties and traditions from the home country (Sanchez, 2007). The resulting pressure makes it difficult to navigate the development of a truly transnational identity as immigrants are forced to choose between cultural identity and survival (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). In addition it presents challenges for Palestinians living in the U.S. in their efforts to resist the occupation and their own refugee status. They experience a conflict between attempts to use U.S. citizenship to pressure the U.S. government to change its policies and the desire to assert the Palestinian right of return. If Palestinians give up their refugee status for U.S. citizenship, many fear that they are forfeiting this right of return and are essentially admitting that Palestine no longer exists.

Purpose of the Study

This study was an attempt to challenge Islamophobia in the U.S. in some small measure by shining a light on the stories of resilience and resistance of the Palestinian people through the collection of narratives of Palestinian youth living in the San

Francisco Bay Area. This research highlighted the diversity and complexity of the Palestinian experience in Northern California. It examined their experiences at the intersections between being Palestinian and being American. And finally it examined the role teachers play in supporting or hindering the development of positive transnational identities in Palestinian youth living in the Bay Area.

Three essential questions will be guiding this research:

1. How are Palestinians living in the San Francisco Bay Area negotiating the space between being Palestinian and being American?

2. How does this negotiation affect youth's efforts to preserve Palestinian cultural ties and traditions?

3. How do Palestinian-American youth in the San Francisco Bay Area believe schools and/or teachers can support students of Palestinian descent in this process of negotiation?

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

The conceptual framework that forms the basis of this study has three main pillars: theories of anti-colonialism (Fanon,1963; Said, 1978); theories of concientization and liberation (Freire, 1970); and human rights education (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2005). While anti-colonialism, concientization and liberation are important theories and ways of thinking that frame this research, human rights education and critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and critical race methodology (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) are foundational to my own teaching practice and are grounded in transformational action.

Using Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony as a starting point, Fanon (1963) describes the idea of colonization of the mind whereby the oppressed actually internalize

the negative dominant narratives of the oppressor about themselves, thus reinforcing their own oppression. In addition to the psychological impact of colonialism, Fanon also describes the lasting economic and political influence of colonial powers long after the titular withdrawal of colonial governments wherein resources continue to be stripped by imperial powers from former colonies with the help of corrupt governments and formerly colonized intellectuals. Said (1978) also deconstructs the impact of colonialism and describes the false binary of east and west, occident and orient, that essentializes and dehumanizes people in the Middle East. He also illuminates how this framework was used to advance the cause of not only settler colonialism, but also neo-liberalism (Said, 1997).

The way to shift this paradigm, according to Freire (1970) is through his concept of conscientization, which emphasizes the development of a critical consciousness, and is a necessary condition for personal and societal transformation as well as the lasting liberation of all people. Freire describes this consciousness raising as *reading the world* and urges continual learning and reflection. This is an essential step in the process of critical praxis whereby transformational change can occur. It is only through continued action and reflection that change is possible. Reflection without action is pointless and action without reflection is blind. Both are required for liberation.

Human rights education promises to be the framework through which that action can be taken in practice. Tibbits (2005) highlights the need for the humanization of all people and utilizes a human rights education framework. She emphasizes the need to teach about liberation using the language of human rights coupled with engaged pedagogy that can lead to change. Bajaj (2011) connects human rights education to the

transformation of the self as well as society. She describes the liberatory effects of critical pedagogy through a human rights lens so that as practitioners are themselves changed, they push for change on a societal level. It is this pedagogical approach that can change the way students and teachers learn and work together toward liberation.

I am also including Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) as an important frame, with a specific focus on the use of counter-narratives as a methodology. Critical Race Theory (CRT), which began as a legal framework for challenging institutionalized oppression in the United States has now expanded into other areas including education. It simultaneously puts forward the centrality of race in any understanding of oppression in the U.S. while also acknowledging the complexity of the intersectionality of other types of oppression like those based on gender, sexual orientation or class for example. One of the central tenets of Critical Race Theory is the use of counter-narratives, which posit that the best way to understand historically oppressed peoples is through narrative, especially narratives that counter the dominant paradigm. Individual storytelling must be an integral part of not only acknowledgement of pain, but also celebration of success. Voices from communities of color who have been silenced for so long, must be heard and honored both within and outside of those communities. These counter-narratives, which Solorzano and Yosso (2002) call *critical race methodology,* are necessary for the growth and healing both of the oppressed and the oppressors. Nothing can be changed without an acknowledgement of the conditions of oppression as well as what it takes to overcome it; systemic change requires many voices over time. This research study is not only an attempt to listen to those voices, but also to

bring those voices to the attention of white teachers in order to impact the current discourse and ultimately teaching practice.

Positionality of the Researcher

Transparency about my own positionality is critical to this research, not only regarding participants, but also for myself as a researcher. It was important that I continued to reflect upon my own practice and motivations to ensure that I was allowing participants to speak for themselves and not placing my own agenda and interpretations ahead of their own. I am a white American Catholic woman who teaches at a Title I school where the majority of my students are students of color, and significant portion of those students are of Palestinian descent. As I also grew up in this neighborhood and attended the school where I now teach, and live here currently, I am in a relatively unique position in relation to the Palestinian-American refugee community in the U.S.

I have been involved with Palestinian solidarity work both here in the U.S. and in the West Bank for many years. I also speak passable Arabic and have longstanding personal ties to the Palestinian community through friends and family; many of the people nearest and dearest to my heart are Palestinian, and many of them are living in the diaspora and have not been allowed to return home. As an American citizen with a United States passport, I have taken pictures of friends' homes and lands and villages within historic Palestine and scooped up earth to bring back with me at their request. Their parents are becoming elderly and soon the generation with memories of Palestine will be gone and a new generation is learning what it means to be Palestinian. This new generation, born not in refugee camps within sight of their homeland and raised with stories of the nakba, but in a foreign country immersed in a culture that stereotypes

Palestinians as terrorists. All of this informs my strong desire to see more Palestinian voices reach the mainstream in all of their rich and splendid complexity.

I teach English, World History and AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) which is a college preparatory study skills class that supports student success in advanced academic classes and prepares them for college. The class is aimed at increasing enrollment in four-year universities for low-income students and students of color who would be the first generation in their families to go to college. I also work in the teacher education program at a small, Catholic university. Most of my students are middle or upper class White women and many have very little lived experience with communities of color of any kind. I teach classes about equity and social justice and utilize a human rights framework with both my teachers and my middle schoolers. This provides them with academic language to describe the inequities they see and the challenges they face.

I have observed first-hand how difficult it can be for Palestinian-American students to navigate the U.S. educational system and I have worked with students, families and other teachers to try to support these students more effectively. In the past seven years teaching in my community, I have witnessed the targeting of Palestinian-American students as well as the often inadequate response of adults. I have noted the almost complete lack of understanding of Islam of my credential candidates as well as the challenges facing Muslim and Arab students regularly. I work on developing critical consciousness with all of my students and my middle schoolers often teach my teachers through their own narratives and experiences. And my teachers' questions help me to reflect on my own practice so that my own consciousness is constantly developing as

well. We all then work together to develop and implement plans for action, whether it is developing an anti-bullying program at our middle school or creating more inclusive curriculum and pedagogical practices for teachers. The most important thing for me as a teacher is that students have language to describe their reality, both the challenges and the glories, and ensure that they recognize and hone their own gifts and abilities as agents of change. I do not empower my students, they are owners of their own power. My job is simply to participate with them in holding the space while we all work together towards liberation.

Delimitations of the Study

The delimitations of the study consist of interviews both of individuals and groups of Palestinians living in the United States. Narratives were collected from Palestinian youth between the ages of 12 and 20. In an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges of transnational identity formation and resistance to the occupation, this research attempted to seek out a diverse group of participants who hold different views about what it means to be Palestinian. However, given the qualitative nature of the research, as well as the preference of depth over breadth, this study was limited to a total of seven participants.

Research Significance

The study is important because it adds positive narratives from the Palestinian community to the existing body of scholarship. Very little information about the experience of Palestinians reaches the general U.S. public, and even less information is disseminated about Palestinians living in the United States. Much of the research about indigenous communities in general and Palestinians in particular focuses on narratives of pain and destruction (Tuck & Yang, 2014) whether they are stories from the Occupied

Territories (Malek & Hoke, 2014), or narratives of Palestinian-Americans (Bayoumi, 2008). This dissertation attempts to go beyond this and describe the resistance and resilience of the Palestinian people in all of its complexity but within a positive framework. Rather than describing tragedy in detail, this research will illuminate triumphs, both large and small in an attempt to move toward research described by Tuck & Yang (2014) as "desire-based research" (p. 231). This type of research does not ignore stories of pain, but honors the different ways of being and knowing that emerges out of these experiences (Tuck & Yang, 2014).

As an American, it is my government and my tax dollars which make the occupation of Palestine possible to a large extent; thus it is also my responsibility to leverage my privilege to help to change this in any small way possible. Palestinians ultimately will be the ones to end the occupation and win their right to return home but this study may help to create more conversations about the master narrative regarding Palestinians and shift the discourse slightly in the direction of justice so that the Palestinian-American experience can be seen in all of its complexity.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the term *American* refers to a citizen of the United States of America. While clearly problematic, as there are certainly people living within the United States without documentation that should also be considered American, I use the term *American* as my students understand it, attached to citizenship status. It is important to note that there were times throughout this research when the participants used the term *American* as code for *White American.* I often asked for clarification when this term was used, and when they clarified that they meant White Americans I have added this term in parentheses or explained its usage. However, when the term American

is used alone, without this parenthetical addition, it should be understood to be a reference to all people living within the United States of America regardless of race or ethnicity.

Anti-colonialism refers to the movement of indigenous peoples around the world against colonialism, settler colonialism and their effects (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). *Colonialism* is the process of conquest of land and pillaging of resources by an occupying power that includes the transfer of its people into the country of occupation as a means to solidifying conquest and maintaining control of the territory and resources as well as the maintenance of a hierarchical system of inequality between the colonizer and the colonized (Veracini, 2011). *Settler colonialism* is a system bent on the eradication of the indigenous population through either genocide, cultural destruction and assimilation or transfer (Wolfe, 2006). While colonialism and settler colonialism often operate in the same place at the same time and share the desire for land and resources, their ultimate aims are different (Veracini, 2011).

Conscientization (Freire, 1978) is the process of developing a *critical consciousness* or a critical awareness of the systems of oppression in operation in society that reinforce hegemony.

A *counter-narrative* is a narrative that disrupts or talks back to the dominant narrative in order to create a story that is more complex and complete (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Hegemony refers to the social, cultural, political and economic dominance of one country or group over others (Gramsci, 2014).

Hijab is the word used to describe the headscarf worn by some Muslim women.

Islamophobia is defined as "an irrational distrust, fear or rejection of the Muslim religion and those who are (perceived as) Muslims" (van Driel, 2004, p. x).

For the purposes of this study, an *Israeli* is defined as a Jewish person living within the boundaries of historic Palestine.

Microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color" (Sue et. al, 2007, p. 271).

Neoliberalism is a political and economic ideology that supports free trade, privatization, minimal government regulation of business and the elimination of government spending on social services (Dictionary.com, 2015).

Transnationality or *transnational identity* is defined as "the condition of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space" (Ong, 1999, p. 4).

Zionism is defined as the movement for the immigration and settlement of the land in historic Palestine by the Jewish people as well as the maintenance of Jewish political, religious and cultural supremacy in that region (Jewish Virtual Library, 2015).

Part Two: Literature Review

Introduction

The review of the literature focuses on the particularities surrounding the expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland as well as the challenges facing them here in the United States. First, the socio-historical context of Palestinian forced migration will be reviewed. This will include the original events that precipitated this forced migration as well as the ongoing occupation of Palestine that continues to drive Palestinians into exile and impede the ability of many to return home. Second, information about Palestinians in the United States will be detailed. This section will outline not only demographic information, but also look at ethnographic research and narratives that illuminate the experiences of Palestinian-American youth. Third, the literature regarding Islamophobia and structural racism will be examined; how it functions in the Western corporate media as well as the educational system in the United States. And finally, the literature on youth identity will be related, including issues that impact that process, such as race, religion, and immigration with particular attention to the development of transnational identity.

Socio-Historical Context

The origins of the Zionist colonial project and the British Mandate period.

Palestine, situated at the crossroads of East and West on the Mediterranean, with some of the most fertile land in the surrounding desert, has long been a target of conquest and occupation. Throughout history many different groups of people have occupied the country from the ancient Romans, to the Ottoman Turks and more recently the British. As the Zionist ideology developed in Europe in the nineteenth century in response to Anti-Semitism there, Zionists began to see the colonization of Palestine as the

culmination of their ideals (Pappe, 2006). The Zionist colonial project began with the immigration of small numbers of people to Palestine and the purchasing of land from absentee owners (Pappe, 2004) and reached its zenith with the expulsion of over three quarters of the indigenous population and the destruction and colonization of hundreds of villages in 1948 (Khalidi, 2006; Pappe, 2006; UNRWA, 2015).

Israeli historian Pappe (2004) traces the origins of this tragedy to the beginnings of Zionism in Europe in the late nineteenth century. He notes the rampant anti-Semitism and regular pogroms directed at Jewish communities throughout Europe over the centuries culminated in the understandable desire for a Jewish homeland. Zionist leader, Theodor Herzl initially negotiated a deal with the British government for land in Uganda, but when he was unable to convince other Zionists to settle in Uganda, Hertzl set his sights on Palestine. In the wake of the first wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine in 1882, Herzl convened the first Zionist Congress in Switzerland in 1897 where he proposed the Jews *retake* Palestine.

During and immediately following World War I, Zionists began to purchase large tracts of land in historic Palestine, which began to change the dynamics in what had still been largely a rural society. This led to what Pappe (2004) calls "the pauperization of rural Palestine" (p. 97) whereby land, wealth and resources became concentrated in the hand of newly arrived Zionist immigrants at the expense of the indigenous Palestinians. In 1920 and 1929, there were sharp increases in violence between Zionists and Palestinians, where prior to this time Jews and Palestinians—both Muslims and Christians—had lived together in relative peace. During this period, under the control of the British Mandate, Zionists also began to attack the British occupation forces and in

1936, Palestinians instituted a general strike, which was followed by a brutal and bloody British response that then led to a Palestinian revolt. The British were weary and opposed additional Jewish immigration to Palestine, and it is within this context that the ship called the *Exodus*, carrying over 4500 Jewish passengers, many of them Holocaust survivors was turned away from Palestine and the passengers were deported to Germany—then under British control. The outrage was universally condemned and the public outcry helped to build sympathy for the Zionist cause and inextricably linked the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel in the minds of many (Pappe, 2004).

So the Zionist colonial project, that functioned as settler colonialism did in other parts of the world, stripping land, resources, and wealth from indigenous peoples for the benefit of the settler colonial class, was able to craft a new narrative that described the colonizers as victims and rendered the indigenous Palestinians invisible to much of the world for over 60 years (Pappe, 2006).

The nakba and the naksa.

According to Pappe (2006), by 1947, less than one third of the total population of historic Palestine was Jewish and only 5.8% of the land was in Jewish hands. When the newly formed United Nations created a partition plan that would not only divide the country but award over 50% of the most valuable land to what local people considered only the newest wave of colonial settlers, the offer was rejected. This set in motion the events that led up to what the Palestinians would later come to call the nakba, or the catastrophe, when three quarters of the indigenous Palestinian population was forced into exile.

Pappe (2006) outlines the details of the Zionist colonial project that recognized early on that Palestinians would need to be removed from their native land if an exclusively Jewish state was to be achieved. Zionism is a specific strain of Judaism which involves the colonization of all of the lands of historic Palestine and the maintenance of Jewish supremacy within those lands (Jewish Virtual Library, 2015). Pappe notes not only repeated statements by the founders of Zionism that the *transfer* of Palestinians would be necessary, but also details the implementation of those plans throughout the process of colonization. Zionists believed that coexistence with indigenous Palestinians was not desired or possible and began their plans to remove them from the land by force (Pappe, 2006).

This process of expelling Palestinians by killing people, burning and destroying villages and planting mines in the rubble so that people could not return was called Plan Dalet and was adopted by Zionist leaders officially in 1948 (Pappe, 2006). This process of terrorizing neighborhoods and whole villages in order to force indigenous Palestinians to flee or face execution created over 750,000 Palestinian refugees, destroyed 531 villages wholesale and emptied 11 Palestinian neighborhoods within cities across Palestine (Khalidi, 2006). An additional 300,000 people were again displaced (many for the second time) in 1967 during a second Israeli invasion of the remaining land in Palestine (Qumsiyeh, 2011). Over 60 years later, Palestinians still continue to live as refugees.

Forced migration and the modern occupation.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the end of 2015 there were 65.3 million forcibly displaced persons in the world (UNHCR,

2015). This number has increased dramatically in recent years due to the increasing levels of conflict around the world in places like Syria, Honduras and Nigeria. Of that 65.3 million, 21.3 million have been officially classified as refugees and Badil Resource Center for Refugee Rights (2015) estimates that of those, approximately 7.2 million are Palestinians. That means that about one third of all refugees in the world are Palestinian and over 70% of all Palestinians are refugees (Badil, 2015). The United Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established after 1948 specifically to support the vast numbers of Palestinian refugees and notes that nearly one third of those refugees live within 59 UNRWA refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza.

There are also about 355,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) of Palestinian descent living within what are now the borders of Israel (Al-Awda, 2015) and the number of IDPs within Israel, the West Bank and Gaza continues to grow as a result of the continuing occupation of Palestine. In recent years, 57,000 Palestinians have become IDPs as a result of home demolitions, land confiscation, military incursions and the construction of illegal colonial settlements on stolen Palestinian land in the West Bank and within the 1948 borders of Israel (Al-Awda, 2015) while Human Rights Watch (2015) estimates that 108,000 people were made homeless by the Israeli military destruction in Gaza in the summer of 2014.

The refugee crisis continues because of the Israeli government's continued policies in direct contravention of Palestinian human rights. The United Nations (UN) general assembly passed resolution 194 (UNRWA, 2015) in 1948 which guaranteed the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and which has been reaffirmed by the UN general assembly 110 times in the intervening years (Al-Awda, 2015). This right

is also affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) unanimously adopted by UN member nations in 1948 (UN, 2015). Israel's admission into the United Nations was conditional upon the acceptance of all UN resolutions including 194, and yet to this date, it is still refusing to allow Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes (Al-Awda).

Israel enacted a series of laws and policies which led to the continued dispossession of not only those who had been forced into exile in the diaspora, but also those who remained within historic Palestine. In 1950, Israel passed the Absentee Property Law, this allowed the government to confiscate the land of refugees, even IDPs who still resided within historic Palestine (Qumsiyeh, 2011). In 1965, the Planning and Building Law was ratified which required building permits be approved by the Israeli government (Qumsiyeh, 2011). While theoretically neutral, building permits are effectively impossible to obtain as over 94% of Palestinian applications for permits are denied, so that any and all growth is automatically illegal and subject to demolition by the Israeli government (ICAHD, 2015). The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions also reported in 2015 that of the thousands of Palestinian homes that have been destroyed in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1967, over 47% of those demolitions occurred between the year 2000 and early 2012 (ICAHD, 2015). The apartheid wall that Israel built ostensibly for safety reasons, was also found to be an instrument of dispossession (Lein, & Cohen-Lifshitz, 2005) whereby the Israeli government unlawfully seized large tracts of land in an effort to legitimize colonial settlements that had been found to be illegal under international law (4th Geneva Convention, 1949).

Additional human rights violations include the theft of water, the destruction of resources by the government and settlers, the restriction of movement, and the routine arrest and detention of Palestinians without charge. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem (2009), the Israeli government confiscates all water resources and distributes 80% to Israelis and the remaining 20% to Palestinians. B'Tselem also reports that Palestinians live on 66 liters of water a day, which is well below the minimum standard of 100 liters a day set by the World Health Organization while Israelis use 235 liters a day. Settlers routinely burn olive groves or poison wells on Palestinian land (Malek & Hoke, 2014) and are rarely held accountable by Israeli soldiers (Human Rights Watch, 2015) who far from being neutral supporters of peace and safety are simply guards for illegal settlers and have the financial backing of the Israeli government (Levinson, 2012). Roads and checkpoints which dot the landscape throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) are segregated and severely limit Palestinian freedom of movement (Assaf, 2003). Many are not able to reliably get to work or school and must leave hours early in anticipation of long lines (Stohlman & Aladin, 2003). Most disturbingly, since 1967 Palestinians have been essentially living under emergency military laws, are prosecuted in military courts where proceedings are often only held in Hebrew if charges are brought at all and are held in military prisons (DCI, 2012). Palestinians are routinely arrested and held without charges (Human Rights Watch, 2015) and tortured in prison (DCI, 2012). Children as young as nine are subjected to this same treatment (Cook, Hanieh and Kay, 2004) and a recent study found that a majority of Palestinian children who are arrested are removed from their homes in the middle of the

night, interrogated without parents present, threatened, and are the victims of physical violence in Israeli military prisons (DCI, 2012).

A recent survey of 503 Israeli Jews conducted by the polling agency Dialog on behalf of the Yisraela Goldblum Fund found that a majority supported the continuation and extension of policies of apartheid in Israel and the OPT (Levy, 2012). The strength of Israeli hegemony is such that Palestinians are not only unable to return, but many who have remained within the borders of historic Palestine feel compelled to leave for the sake of their families in the face of such overwhelming difficulties. All of this frames the context of migration for Palestinian immigrants and plays a part in informing their experience in the United States.

Palestinians in the United States.

According to the United States Census Bureau (2013a), there were 1,822,511 people in the United States of Arab descent. Of that number, 83, 241 were of Palestinian descent (2010d). The largest number of people of Arab ancestry live in California, which has a total population of 38,332,521 (US Census, 2013b) while 241,635 are of Arab descent (US Census, 2010a). The Arab American Institute (2011) contends that this number is underreported in official census figures and may actually be as high as 817,455 (AAIF, 2011). However, the Institute uses official census data to conclude that about 7% of the Arab population in California is of Palestinian descent, 5% are Jordanian, 7% are Syrian, and another 22% are Lebanese (AAIF, 2011). These figures may also be problematic since survey respondents are asked to identify their country of origin, and many Palestinians who are living in the California grew up in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria and may be listing that as their country of origin despite being of

Palestinian descent. In the county in Northern California where this research will take place, 24% of the Arab population identifies as Palestinian (US Census, 2010b, 2010c).

The experience of Palestinians in the United States is as varied as that of other ethnic groups and dependent upon geographic, economic and religious factors among others. Bayoumi (2008) describes the experiences of young Arabs living in the United States, and several of the narratives are of young people of Palestinian descent. Bayoumi (2008) recounts the diversity of lived experiences of several young people including a U.S. marine and a storeowner's son. Malek (2011) edits *Patriot Acts: Narratives of Post-9/11 Injustice,* a volume in the Voice of Witness series, which includes several stories of Palestinians. The narratives in this series include the targeting, intimidation and arrest of Palestinians living in the United States. Arrest, deportation and incarceration are common experiences in many of these narratives. These stories, which are collected by scholars and activists, are detailed in this section to bring the reality of the experience of Palestinian youth to life.

Rami's story (Bayoumi, 2008) speaks to the devastation he experienced as his mother and then his father are arrested for the illegal sale of tobacco. Authorities were convinced that small-scale theft in Arab neighborhoods was funding terrorism, which led to his parents' arrest. While his mother was eventually released, the loss of his father created confusion for the fifteen-year-old. He became more religious as he got older and eventually became an imam involved with a group of Muslims charged with changing perceptions in non-Muslim communities regarding what it means to be a Muslim (Bayoumi, 2008).

Sara recounts her devastation at the arrest and conviction of her father for aiding terrorists (Malek, 2011), and Ghassan relates his own experience of arrest and imprisonment on charges of providing material support for terrorists (Malek, 2011). Charges against both men grew out of their involvement with charitable institutions that provided humanitarian aid for people in the West Bank and Gaza. Despite the fact that no evidence was presented in either case of either of the men's charities being linked to terrorism, or that either of them were aware of any such links, both were convicted in the wave of Islamophobic emotion following 9/11. Sara's father is serving a 12-year sentence and Ghassan received 65 years (Malek, 2011).

One narrative speaks to the diversity of Palestinian-American experience as the student describes his life as a marine who enlisted just prior to 9/11. Sami, who is half-Palestinian and half-Egyptian and a Christian, identifies most strongly as a New Yorker. He enlists and becomes a translator after his first lackluster attempt at college and is in basic training in North Carolina when 9/11 occurs. Ultimately it is his return to New York after two tours in Iraq that is most poignant. Sami is overwhelmed with emotion as he and his Puerto Rican, New Jersey born girlfriend drive back into Brooklyn. He then begins university and gravitates toward the Arab Students Club. Despite this, he describes feeling isolated from other Arabs because he is Christian, doesn't listen to Arab music, doesn't want to visit Palestine, and doesn't date Arab girls. He admits to lots of conflict with other Arab students because of his support of American soldiers, though he supports the troops but not the war in Iraq (Bayoumi, 2008).

Although each of the Palestinian-Americans in Bayoumi's (2008) work are living very different lives in many ways, they all struggle with the integration of their American

and Palestinian selves. Akram is a rather secular Muslim working in his family's grocery store, Omar is a journalist who has worked at Al-Jazeera, Sami is a Christian who enlists in the Marines and Rami is a devout Muslim who becomes an imam. Even though Sami understands that he is not a stereotypical Arab, he continues to gravitate toward other Arab students in an attempt to reconcile the two parts of himself. Akram expresses a desire to leave and live in the West Bank as America does not seem to want him to stay. And while Omar is dedicated to staying in the United States, he finds himself questioning the decision to do so when the country seems to be at best ambivalent toward him. Counter to the dominant narrative, it is possibly Rami who is most comfortable with his place in American society. As someone who confronts Islamophobia directly and regularly, he is not naïve about the reality of dominant perceptions regarding Palestinians and Muslims, but he has chosen to work to change this and this, along with his strong religious faith seems to have produced a person who is more adept at navigating the racism in the culture without it changing his own perception of himself or other people who are not Muslim.

Microaggressions are a common theme in these narratives, especially in schools (Abu El-Haj, 2007; Bayoumi, 2008; Malek, 2011). Several youth describe teachers who are overly solicitous to White students while being eager to find fault with Palestinians or other Arab youth (Bayoumi, 2008). Akram recalls a teacher asking him if his kuffiyeh, a traditional Palestinian scarf, was a symbol of his Anti-Semitism. He also recounts a regular customer who begins telling people not to shop at his family's local store because they are Palestinian and terrorists. The epithet of terrorist is heard with startling regularity and leaves little doubt as to the hostility of the speaker (Bayoumi, 2008).

Rima (Malek, 2011) describes the repeated attacks her small children faced at their schools, including parents objecting to her first and second grade daughters bringing cupcakes to share with their classmates during Ramadan because of the timing (referring to 9/11 which had happened two months earlier). And a recent college graduate named Omar (Bayoumi, 2008) has lots of journalism experience and strong letters of recommendation from leaders in the field, but wonders if he can't find employment because a large portion of his experience came from working at Al-Jazeera, the Arabic language network based in Qatar.

In addition to narrative works, ethnography has also been used to elucidate the experiences of youth of Palestinian descent living in the U.S. Abu El-Haj (2007) describes the results of an ethnographic study of Palestinian-American students in high school on the East Coast of the United States. This extensive study illuminates the experiences of Palestinian-American students living in post 9/11 New York. These students are very open about the constant disciplinary actions taken against them by teachers in total disproportion to other groups of students in their school and the regular microaggressions they encounter at school and in society at large. The students in her study describe strong emotional and cultural ties to their Palestinian communities in the United States and in Palestine, but their view of American citizenship was much more utilitarian. While they disagree about what specific things denote *Palestinianness,* they understand that there are advantages to being U.S. citizens. They value the ability to work, go to school, vote when they are adults and move more freely with American passports, but many still long to live in Palestine if conditions there were to improve.

This study is an example of some of the negative consequences of the pervasiveness of Islamophobia in the U.S and its impact on Palestinian youth (Abu El-Haj, 2007).

Islamophobia as Structural Racism

Since the founding of the United States, racist systems of oppression of people of color have been institutionalized within its society (Battalora, 2013). Whether it was the original sin of land theft and the forced migration of the indigenous peoples in the Americas (Takaki, 1993), the kidnapping and enslavement and continued segregation of African people (Zinn, 2003) or the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II (Takaki, 1993), people of color have long been excluded from the American Dream that was reserved for Whites only. Omi and Winant (2014) describe in detail how the concept of race is socially constructed and reproduced by institutions of the dominant culture. Battalora (2013) details the use of policy and law in the United States that created an unequal system of advantage that institutionalized White power and supremacy. Massey and Denton (1993) describe how this white supremacist hegemony led to segregation in housing that continues to this day despite the fact that the laws and systems that were originally responsible for its creation are now illegal. Bonilla-Silva (2014) describes how the systems of maintenance of white supremacy have now changed and are more covert and thus more difficult to recognize and challenge. He links discrimination and segregation in housing with education and thus employment and also details the social segregation and controls that serve to normalize whiteness and devalue people and communities of color (Bonilla-Silva, 2014).

It is within this larger context of racism and white supremacy that Islamophobia emerges. Islamophobia is defined by van Driel (2004) as "an irrational distrust, fear or

rejection of the Muslim religion and those who are (perceived as) Muslims" (van Driel, 2004, p. x). Edward Said (1978) in his seminal work in *Orientalism* notes that the devaluation and degradation of Arabs and Muslims is part of a broader system of oppression that places Western European culture in direct opposition to all others. It is this false binary that enables the normalization of white Western culture and devalues anything that differs from that norm. Said (1978) describes the history of Western exploration of the rest of the world and the creation of the myth of an *Oriental other* placed in diametric opposition to those in the West. This us versus them, good versus bad, white versus black mentality serves as the framework for Western hegemony. Said (1994) also makes connections between the solidification of this ideology and the conquest and colonization of other lands, peoples and cultures. This white supremacist ideology is necessary as justification for colonization. Subjugation of people and resources is easier when those people are dehumanized (Said, 1994). This act assuages the guilt of the oppressor while simultaneously mentally imprisoning a portion of the oppressed population through the colonization of the mind (Fanon, 1963). This colonization of the mind, wherein oppressed people internalize negative perceptions of themselves disseminated by the dominant culture has outlasted colonialism itself and continues to be a defining feature of white supremacist societies (Macedo, 2006).

The dominant narrative of the Western corporate media.

The Western corporate media reinforces this bifurcated ideology of East versus West by presenting an incomplete and biased picture of what it means to be Muslim. This applies to popular movies and television (Shaheen, 2001; Shaheen, 2008), political and news commentary (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008) and reporting (Luyendijk, 2009;

Said, 1997) and especially the portrayal of Muslim women in all types of media (Sensoy & Marshall, 2011; Skalli, 2004).

Jack Shaheen (2001) in his exhaustive survey of popular culture and media details the rampant Islamophobia in Hollywood films and television. He found that Arabs and Muslims are highly stereotyped and depicted as either stupid, rich and lazy, or terrorists to be feared. They are emphasized for their otherness and universalized as backward, ignorant, overly religious and violent. Women are either helpless victims in need of a Western savior or exoticised, hypersexualized objects with villainous intentions (Shaheen, 2001). This only intensified after 9/11 as television became the vehicle for more than 50 different shows that dehumanize Arabs or Muslims (Shaheen, 2008). And in 2015, *American Sniper* (Morgan, Lorenz, Cooper, Lazar & Eastwood, 2014) was nominated for Best Picture and watched by millions of Americans though it depicted a *hero* who killed Iraqi children. The actual subject of the movie, American soldier Chris Kyle, wrote a book about his life that the movie was based on and never mentions killing children (Kyle, McEwan & DeFelice, 2013), but Hollywood filmmakers decided to insert it into the movie version.

Beyond Hollywood images, which it could be argued are supposed to be fictional, images of Arabs and Muslims in the news are also replete with Islamophobic imagery. Gottschalk and Greenberg (2008) examine anti-Muslim sentiment in political cartoons in the United States and reveal not only the demonization of Arabs and Muslims, but factual misunderstandings about the Muslim world. They note that many Americans seem to think that Islam is a religion confined to the Middle East, when in fact the majority of adherents live elsewhere in the world. They also explain that while a very

small minority of Muslims are what the Western media describes as fundamentalists, many Americans believe it is the majority (Gottschalk & Greenberg, 2008).

Luyendijk (2009) describes in detail how the dysfunction in the Western corporate media distorts how people in the West view people in the Middle East. From his vantage as a reporter fluent in Arabic, he saw how what made it on the news was frequently less about the most important or complete picture and more about what story was easy or convenient to tell. He concludes that the most salient feature of the incomplete and inaccurate corporate media reporting is in fact that this is the way it is designed to operate. The Western hegemonic worldview that dehumanizes people in the Middle East is part of a larger system of oppression that does not require that individual reporters be anti-Muslim or anti-Arab. One particular corporate filter or lens is being presented as the only lens because it reinforces Western corporate hegemony (Luyendijk, 2009).

Edward Said (1997) also addresses the corporate news media's distortion of the Muslim experience. He notes the depiction of Islam as monolithic and unchanging; as a religion stuck in an earlier and more backwards time. He describes the hypocrisy of language that is used when talking about Islam and Christianity where observant Muslims are *zealous* and observant Christians are *pious* and Muslims who kill people are *terrorists* while Christians who kill people are *criminals*. He also emphasizes that what is omitted is as important as what is covered. He argues that it is not that news should not be reported, but that it needs to be placed in appropriate context if it is to be understood and it needs to be balanced by stories that show the totality of Muslim experience. Luyendijk (2009) and Said (1997) both discuss how this relates to coverage of the Israeli

Occupation of Palestine and the demonization of the Palestinian people. It is not that Palestinians are not committing atrocities and Israelis are; it is that what is reported is completely out of proportion to what is occurring and that this disproportionate level of violence is actually reported in an inverse relationship to reality. So that while stories about Palestinian acts of violence dominate the corporate news media, exponentially more violence is perpetrated by Israeli troops, and little to no context is ever provided (Luyendijk, 2009; Said, 1997).

The depictions of Muslim women in the corporate media in the United States is particularly problematic. As Skalli (2004) points out, the West demonizes Muslim men and women who are resisting colonialism and its legacy and ignores its role in creating the oppressive conditions that exacerbate these problems. She states that as Muslim men are increasingly stripped of their agency by colonialism and the puppet regimes that serve neoliberal corporate interests, many are driven to exercise what little power they have over Muslim women. However, this fundamentalist patriarchal position was specifically exploited and supported by colonial regimes. Now Muslim women are told by the West that their only route to liberation is the complete rejection of their culture.

Sensoy and Marshall (2011) note the specific stereotypes of Muslim girls and women that are reinforced in much of young adult literature as well as the idea that salvation only comes from the West. They note that Muslim women and girls are depicted largely as veiled, nameless, and silent victims without agency. The argument is made that Islam is inherently oppressive to women and the long history of strong feminist women in Islam is omitted. Here, the problem is not only that Muslim girls and women are described in one-dimensional and stereotypical ways, it is also that more complex and

complicated depictions are absent. The problem is not that some Muslim women and girls are not living in oppressive conditions, it is that this is not the only information that is important to know about what it means to be a Muslim woman.

Islamophobia in the educational system in the United States.

Within the United States, the broader issues which define Islamophobia in the society at large, impact the experience of Arab and Muslim youth in the educational system. Islam is described as monolithic, static (Khan, 2009), primitive, violent and oppressive (Abukhattala, 2004; Mossalli, 2009). The terms Arab, Muslim, and terrorist are used interchangeably (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2012) and teaching about Islamic society and culture is often essentialized (Khan, 2009), superficial and incomplete (Sensoy, 2009). Muslim students and families report widespread attacks ranging from microaggressions (Imam, 2009) to outright targeting by peers and even teachers (Abu El-Haj, 2007).

Sensoy (2009) examined the depiction of Muslims in textbooks used in schools in the United States and Canada. One of the first things she notes is the conflation of Arab and Muslim in textbooks. These two things are seen as interchangeable when in fact the majority of Muslims in the world are not Arabs and many Arabs are in fact not Muslim. There is also confusion about the fact that there are Muslims in the Middle East who are not Arabs and do not speak Arabic, as in Iran and Turkey. So while Indonesia is the country with the most Muslims in the world, only 2% of Muslims in textbooks live in Southeast Asia while 78% of Muslims in textbooks are depicted as Middle Easterners (Sensoy, 2009).

Sensoy (2009) also found that omissions and emphasis in textbooks produced a skewed vision of Islamic life due to the overrepresentation of modern Muslims in

religious settings and historic Muslims in academic ones. This gives the impression that Islamic society's best days are in the past, and that in modern times, Muslims have become more religiously focused. It also reinforces the binary of backward versus modern in reference to Islam and Christianity rather than placing Islam in the context of connections to the other Abrahamic traditions of Judaism and Christianity. According to Sensoy (2009)

> textbook representations reproduce a cultural essentialism, creating the image of a community that is unified, homogenous, fixed, and consenting while simultaneously positioning that entire community as opposite to all other religious traditions. Acknowledgement of a plurality or tensions *within* this Muslim world is avoided, and the perception of a homogenous Islamic world-view is cultivated. (pp. 81)

This essentialism is emphasized through the lack of diverse and realistic representations of modernity in Muslim societies. Very few textbooks contained images or descriptions of Muslim cities as modern places with tall buildings, vehicles, or modern technology. Muslim cities are differentiated from rural ones mainly because of the presence of larger numbers of people where images of crowded marketplaces or mosques abound (Sensoy, 2009).

Abukhattala (2004) also discusses the broad brush used to paint Islamic society in school curriculum. He describes the same conflation of Arab and Muslim that other authors note as well as the depiction of Muslims as violent, religious and backward. He catalogs the bias in perspective and language used to describe colonialism that oppressed Muslims across the world as a positive development that brought civilization to different

lands and which described European Crusaders as noble while religious Muslims were zealots. He also explodes the myth of the universal oppression of Muslim women by the hijab. While he acknowledges that many women are in fact oppressed, wearing hijab, particularly in the United States and other Western countries is often a sign of self-empowerment and agency. These women are routinely asked to defend their choice to wear hijab and therefore rarely do so without careful self-examination (Abukhattala, 2004).

Mossalli (2009) also found a link between the decision to wear hijab and a strong sense of self. Mossalli's work is a case study of an American high school student named Rana who chose to wear hijab. Because of the outsider status that hijab often confers on Muslim girls, the decision to wear it, for Rana was based on a strong sense of herself as both a Muslim and an American. Mossalli relates that the pervasiveness of expressions of Christianity at Rana's school served to normalize and Americanize religious expression for her. Rana also expressed affinity for the American ideal of individualism and used religious expression of Islam in her predominantly White Christian community in Louisiana as a proud outward sign of her desire to be her own person and differentiate herself from her peers. Rather than a symbol of oppression, Rana's hijab was for her a symbol of her faithfulness and pride in herself and her heritage (Mossalli, 2009).

Khan (2009) articulates the problem of *us versus them* binary categorizations which only serve to separate us as human beings and emphasize difference at the expense connection. She emphasizes the diversity of Muslim experience and problematizes the omission of depictions of Muslims in everyday situations. Muslims are only highlighted when they are performing as Muslims and so their common humanity is difficult for

some to access. She notes that what it means to be a Muslim is as diverse an experience as that for Christians, or any other worldwide religion. She also notes that this experience is contested within the Muslim community just as it is in other religions, so that no one person is the absolute authority on what is or is not Islam (Sensoy, 2009).

Imam (2009) details the experiences of Muslim children and families in schools in the Midwestern United States. Her study of six Muslim-Americans living in the Midwest details their experiences with the public schools there. She notes that Muslim students are routinely expected to celebrate Christian holidays in public schools and often penalized for refusing to do so. Families report students being required to dress up for Halloween and sing religious songs at Christmas while inclusion of Islamic traditions is discouraged. When discussions of Islam are encouraged, many families report students feeling pressured to defend their beliefs and religion especially when current events are discussed in the classroom mostly in the context of terrorism being linked to Islam by teachers. She also relates the disrespect for dietary restrictions and modesty requirements where teachers feel comfortable contradicting parental rules about clothing and dating. Parents also report disrespect for students' ability to pray by both peers and administration. Students engaged in prayer are ridiculed by peers and punished by administrators who then disallow prayer at school (Imam, 2009).

Abu El-Haj (2007) describes similar incidents when she details how students are often targets of peer aggression, both inside the classroom and in the hallways, and are subsequently the ones who are punished for resulting exchanges on the grounds of disrespect. She details how frustrated students are by ignorant peer comments, but also how this is magnified when the offender is a teacher. She describes one incident when a

student named Adam arrived home to find his mother crying and Secret Service agents searching his home because a teacher had reported that his brother Ibrahim had threatened to kill the President of the United States. While the teacher reported that it was a seemingly random declaration as he was sitting alone reading the newspaper in the back of the classroom, Ibrahim's account, which was subsequently confirmed by accounts of peers in the classroom and a school district judge tasked with disciplinary matters, placed his statement in context. Ibrahim related that other students had been taunting Arab students and referencing recent revelations about Abu Ghraib prison. He responded by asking students how they would feel if their leaders were killed. His attempt to teach his peers about empathy earned him a suspension and a visit by the Secret Service while his taunting peers were never disciplined or even admonished. Students described not only passive acceptance by teachers of hateful statements and epithets made by students, but also direct targeting of students by teachers. Teachers asked students if they were planning terrorist actions, told them to go back home, and one was quoted as saying, "All the Palestinians deserve to die" (Abu El-Haj, 2007, p. 302). The level of vitriol expressed by peers and teachers even caused students to worry that they might be deported or imprisoned in camps as Japanese-Americans had been during World War II (Abu El-Haj, 2007).

Ghaffar-Kucher (2012) conducted a large ethnographic study of Pakistani-American youth in New York City. The study took place at a large public high school, in students' homes, and in the surrounding community. Students in this study also recount incidents of targeting by peers and teachers alike. The author relates that almost every student involved in the study reported being called a terrorist at one time or another.

Once this was even uttered by a teacher directed at a student in jest, but Ghaffar-Kucher correctly describes this as a micro-aggression (Sue et al., 2007) which, regardless of intent, helps to create a hostile school environment. This is exacerbated by the expressed view of teachers that Pakistani and Muslim students are "*narrow-minded* or *inflexible*" (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2012, p. 45) as well as the essentialization that is then evident from statements like this. And when students take exception with inappropriate comments or actions, they are often subject to punishment or at best, ignored (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2012). So many Arab and Muslim youth living in the U.S. must navigate educational spaces that, far from being welcoming places of learning, are actually places where they are targeted and negative messaging from the Western corporate media is reinforced. This challenging socio-political and educational environment is the context within which Palestinian-American students must learn to construct their identity.

Student Identity Development

Identity development is a dynamic process of negotiation, formation, deconstruction and reformation that occurs in schools and the wider society in which schools operate (Sirin & Fine, 2008). The authors of this large ethnographic study describe the ways in which identity is constantly in flux due to input from both self and others, from home as well as the larger world. They describe the stress faced by students with hyphenated identities, which in the case of this study is Muslim-American. They describe the tension that is a part of the process of identity formation for all students as they try to navigate and integrate the various parts of themselves into a cohesive identity. But they also note the "weight of the hyphen" (Sirin & Fine, 2008, p. 85) which describes the extra stress felt by students who carry a targeted identity as Muslim-American

students do. They show that while many students may come from homes with strong families and a solid sense of self within that context, that solidity is challenged and impacted by the perceptions of others (Sirin & Fine, 2008).

Carola Suárez-Orozco (2004) outlines how others influence this process of identity development. She explains that

> Achieved identity is the extent to which an individual achieves a sense of belonging—"I am a member of *this* group." An ascribed identity is imposed either by coethnics—"You are a member of *our* group"—or by members of the dominant culture—"You are a member of *that* group." (Suarez-Orozco, 2004, p. 177)

So that while students are active participants in constructing their identity, messaging from peers, teachers and the larger world also have an impact. She also explains that identity is closely related to performance, namely what activities, practices and language, students engage in to demonstrate identity and affiliation (Suárez-Orozco, 2004).

Rolón-Dow (2004) also explains that identity is co-constructed by students in school. In her two-year ethnographic study in an urban middle school, she examined the ways in which the master narrative about Puerto Rican girls impact the development of students' academic identities. She argues that students' identities are appropriated and affirmed by others. In the case of this study, the dominant narrative is that Puerto Rican girls are hypersexualized and more interested in dating and social activities than education. The issue here for Rolón-Dow (2004) is that the girls in her study are essentialized and sweeping generalizations are made about them by society at large that are then reinforced by teachers and often even the girls themselves. While the girls often

internalize some of the dominant narrative about what it means to be a Puerto Rican girl, they often push back on the idea that being Puerto Rican is incompatible with success in school. This resistance is often incomplete because of the intersectionality of oppression they experience. So while they may challenge ethnic stereotypes and imagery, there is not always the same attention to issues relating to gender. The author notes the dynamic nature of identity and the susceptibility to the images and biases of others (Rolón-Dow, 2004).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explain that critical race theory posits the centrality of race in the United States as well as the importance of the intersectionality of other parts of identity including class and gender, which strongly impacts identity development. Ladson-Billings and Tate recount the history of racism in the United States as the starting point for the centrality of race in the lives of people in the United States. This racialization impacts everyone and must be considered as central while also attending to other factors that mediate one's experience of race like class or gender (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). According to Ginwright (2000), understanding this intersectionality is critical. A singular focus on race explains why the implementation of culturally relevant curriculum is not always successful in heightening student academic achievement. He also argues that students living in extreme poverty often prioritize economic and safety concerns above academic ones, therefore all of the pieces of students' identities must be considered. He emphasizes the importance of the intersectionality of multiple factors that complicate this process like class, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation (Ginwright, 2000).

Sarroub (2001) describes the impact of the intersection of gender and religion on Yemeni-American girls that is different than their male counterparts. This ethnography of Yemeni-American high school students explored the tensions between the various parts of these girls' identities. The author found that girls were much more likely than boys to feel their Yemeni and American selves were in conflict due to cultural expectations relating to responsibilities to home and family that were different from those for boys. Ultimately, Sarroub concludes that when students found that their Yemeni and American selves came into conflict, girls sometimes created *imagined realities* that were capable of bridging the divides between contexts.

Mourchid (2009) details the complexities of the junction of sexual orientation and religion in identity development in a large qualitative study involving interviews and focus groups with self-identified gay Muslims. This study reveals that students' religious identities develop along with other parts of their personal identity. The researcher also discovered that while tension often arose between students' religious identities and their sexual identities, and that this conflict often forced students to explore these issues in isolation. In addition, this study found that many students ultimately created hybrid identities that integrated their religious and sexual identities through a process of increased secularization and spiritualization. Students themselves renegotiated what it means to be Muslim and also be gay or lesbian (Mourchid, 2009).

The ways that students respond to microaggressions and attempt to develop their own identity—rather than have this forced upon them from outside is varied (Abo-Zena, Sahli & Tobias-Nahi, 2009). According to Tatum (1997), some students develop an oppositional identity as a response to institutionalized racism. This oppositional identity

as performed in school can lead to the rejection of the educational system itself as an institution that reproduces systems of domination and oppression. It can also lead to self-segregation in an effort to protect oneself from targeting by the dominant culture. (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2012). Many students form affinity groups that can support them through the difficulties of navigating the spaces between multiple identities. Tatum (1997) describes the positive self-concept that can be nurtured and developed within an affinity group that supports its members through challenging and oppressive experiences. Sirin and Fine (2008) connect this positive self-concept to higher academic achievement and the development of transnationality.

Stonebanks and Sensoy (2011) also describe the importance of the creation of counter-narratives that challenge the dominant narratives about what it means to be a Muslim. In this article, the authors compare their own experiences and note that

> Schools, from primary to higher education, continue to be a source where our sense of self must be negotiated with the master narrative. Is it a coincidence that although we lie in cities that are over four and a half thousand kilometers apart, we both share so many experiences about being "the other" in schools from our lives as students to professors? (p. 73)

The authors go on to outline this master narrative about Muslims being essentially violent, backward, and evil and then each provides their own counterstory in an effort to *talk back* to that dominant narrative. They connect that dominant narrative to the difficulties Arab and Muslim students have with peers, teachers and administrators at school. They also exhort teachers to challenge the reproduction of the Islamophobic master narrative through transformative pedagogy that includes counter-narratives. They

note that while this type of teaching can often be challenging and messy, they add that if there is also transparency and accountability, the normalization of the idea of an evil, violent, backwards Muslim can be disrupted (Stonebanks & Sensoy, 2011).

Transnational identities.

Given the complexity of identity development, the additional complicating factor of transnational affiliation can make the construction of a positive integrated transnational identity difficult. Students confront these challenges in a variety of ways with varying results. Sirin and Fine (2008) explain that immigrant youth, and the children of immigrants can develop transnational identities that are either conflicting, parallel or integrated. Students with conflicting identities feel that being American is diametrically opposed to membership in their home culture, which can produce feelings of frustration and anger. Youth with parallel identities create lives that are separate but which on balance work together. These students are one person at school and someone else at home. Here the home culture is also seen as different from the dominant culture, but both are understood and valued for different reasons. Students with integrated identities are able to navigate their multiple intersectionalities and integrate them into a strong sense of self (Sirin & Fine, 2008).

Olsen (1997) and Abu El-Haj (2007) both describe students who are deluged by microaggressions and the normalization of the dominant culture's negative messages about their home cultures. Each describe the oppositional identity that can develop in response. Because students feel that they cannot ever truly have access to full American citizenship, some reject the need for this outright in favor of closer ties to their home culture or country. This oppositional identity can lead to anger, frustration or sadness,

but many students who choose this path view the choice as a legitimate one (Olsen, 1997; Abu El-Haj, 2007). Negrón-Gonzalez (2009) describes how this oppositional identity can lead to an oppositional consciousness that can be channeled into social justice activism. Her study is an ethnographic portrait of undocumented youth. She relates how the youth activists in her study are constantly defining and redefining their oppositional identity, sometimes rejecting dominant myths and stereotypes and sometimes succumbing to them. Ultimately they use their oppositional identity to work for social justice and positive change (Negron-Gonzalez, 2009).

Maalouf (2000) argues that the complexities of identity mean that individuals are constantly redefining their identity depending upon their context. Identity is essentially fluid and dynamic and while in one context, one aspect of one's identity may be more prominent, while in another context, an entirely different aspect can surface. He argues that while all of these different pieces and negotiations are constantly in flux, they cannot be separated. He admonishes those who would have people choose between different aspects of their identity and explains that each piece of a person is important in understanding who they are. He says that, "Those who can accept their diversity fully will hand on the torch between communities and cultures, will be a kind of mortar joining together and strengthening the societies in which they live." (Maalouf, 2000, p. 36)

Sanchez (2007) explains how ideas about global citizenship and transnationalism are shaped by cultural learning in students' trips between the United States and the countries of origin. This study combined participatory research and ethnography and examined second-generation Mexican-American girls living in California with strong ties to Mexico. The researcher details the out-of-school learning that takes place and how

this informs ideas of identity and global citizenship. Being present in both contexts helps the students to understand their relatively privileged position as members of an industrialized nation like the United States while also allowing them to develop personal *cultural flexibility*. The students are able to successfully navigate cultural norms and expectations both in Mexico and in the United States. This leads to not only a more integrated personal identity but a heightened sense of their positionality in an increasingly globalized world. Their experience of transnationality helps them to develop a more expansive understanding of the world than people who are only exposed to a single context. The families in the study are also explicit about their children learning these lessons. All of the families in the study have United States citizenship, but one father suggests returning from one of their trips to Mexico by being smuggled in with a coyote as undocumented people do so as to understand what undocumented people go through to get to the United States. The researcher relates that this type of learning lends itself to the development of a strong transnational identity that supports the skills and abilities necessary for meaningful interactions in a globalized world (Sanchez, 2007).

Abu El-Haj (2006a) also addresses the issues of transnationality and citizenship (2009a) in two separate articles. In 2009 she investigated the views of Arab immigrant youth on the East Coast of the United States and suggested,

> that we stop thinking about citizenship primarily in relation to national identifications and begin to see it as a set of critical practices—practices that give young people the tools to work for social change within and across the boundaries of nation-states. (Abu El-Haj, 2009a, p. 274)

In 2006, Abu El-Haj examined the work of an Arab American community arts organization on the East Coast of the United States that worked to support youth civic engagement and activism. Here she had similar suggestions that we shift our thinking about transnational citizenship when she described the work of young people in the program to reject the binary thinking of good versus evil people or places in the world and instead worked to connect oppressive conditions and liberatory struggles across the globe (Abu El-Haj, 2006a).

Suárez-Orozco (2004) carefully lays out the obstacles and necessary requirements for the development of a positive transcultural identity. She notes that identity is both achieved and ascribed and that performing identity carries with it the risk of physical and emotional violence on the part of peers and teachers as well as the society at large. And while she found gendered differences, she also found that students who developed strong "bicultural and bilingual competencies" (Suárez-Orozco, 2004, p. 192) were more successful academically, had more valuable skills in an increasingly globalized economy, and had stronger human connections as well. She notes that the ability to successfully navigate different contexts is strongly related to future success in an increasingly globalized world (Suarez-Orozco, 2004).

Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco and Todorova (2008) detail some of the challenges for immigrant youth in the United States but also note that growing global migration has the ability to produce students who are increasingly capable of navigating a more globalized world. This exhaustive national longitudinal study followed immigrant students in the United States between the ages of nine and fourteen for five years, collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. The results confirm that students with

more resources—economic, social, familial, and intrapersonal—attain higher academic achievements; while students who struggle are more likely to have less access to these resources. However they note that increased global migration leads to a more heterogeneous population, even within a given country or city and so students with transnational identities will have acquired more of the skills necessary to navigate this space. They observe that problems can arise when the dominant attitude within the host country is one of hostility and exclusion, but that students who are supported with practical and emotional resources can overcome these obstacles and develop a positive transnational identity (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008).

Conclusion

This review of the literature outlines many challenges facing Palestinian-American youth due both to the circumstances of their immigration as well as structural racism and Islamophobia that is pervasive in the United States. These challenges impact the development of their identity, but the literature also suggests that the development of a transnational identity not only leads to academic success, but also an increase in the skills necessary to navigate an increasingly globalized world. This study will examine student identity development and transnationality of Palestinian-American youth living in the San Francisco bay area within this socio-political and historical context.

Part Three: Methodology

This purpose of this study was to highlight the stories of resilience and resistance of the Palestinian people through the collection of narratives of Palestinians living in the U.S. It examined how Palestinian-Americans negotiate the development of their identities, what resistance and resilience look like, and how they are able to persist personally and culturally within the context of the U.S. It also investigated ways in which educators can best support youth in the development of a positive transnational identity.

Three essential questions guided this research:

1. How are Palestinians living in the San Francisco Bay Area negotiating the space between being Palestinian and being American?

2. How does this negotiation affect youth's efforts to preserve Palestinian cultural ties and traditions?

3. How do Palestinian-American youth in the San Francisco Bay Area believe schools and/or teachers can support students of Palestinian descent in this process of negotiation?

Research Design

This qualitative study involved a combination of interviews and focus groups in the tradition of counter-narratives which are an integral part of critical race theory (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Counter-narratives place singular importance on the power of storytelling for historically oppressed peoples. These first person narratives challenge the dominant discourse and serve not only to strengthen communities of color but also to educate dominant communities about the complexity of reality. Counter-

stories emphasize the importance of experiential knowledge and socially just action. These stories are an antidote to master narratives that decontextualize information in service of the normalization of dominance (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In education, storytelling is one of the most effective tools for learning, because of its ability to draw readers in and make connections and elicit emotions that can cause a shift in thinking and ways of being.

Lynn and Parker (2006) detail the multiplicity of ways in which Critical Race Theory has been used to critique educational research. They note that Latinos (Delgado Bernal, 2002), Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders (Chang, 1993), critical feminists (Wing, 1997), disability rights activists (Harter, Scott, Novak, Leeman & Morris, 2006) and even teachers (Milner, 2008) have all used CRT and counter-narratives for this purpose. Though CRT was originally designed as a legal framework for examining institutionalized racism impacting the Black community, it has since been used by other marginalized communities both within a legal framework and within education in order to challenge systems of oppression.

Other scholars have noted the way in which the law has been used in the social construction of Whiteness. One of the central tenets of CRT is that race is a social construct (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This means that while there is no biological basis for differences between races, there is nonetheless a powerful difference in the way race is experienced by different groups of people. As a society, White people have historically been granted higher status and Black people less, not because of real differences, but because of a history of racism and oppression born out of European colonialism. Haney-Lopez (1996) outlines the way in which the law was used to create

and strengthen binary divisions along the lines of black and white which served to allow some groups partial access to the system of White privilege while simultaneously excluding others. He notes how Asian-Americans and Latinos sometimes benefit from temporary access to the system of White privilege, but are more often harmed by it. The possible loss of those privileges are used against them in an attempt to divide them from other people of color and their struggles against an oppressive system.

Gualtieri (2001) outlines the struggle for people from the Middle East to attain the legal classification of "White" in order to be eligible for American citizenship. In the cases outlined in her article, Gualtieri notes that this legal strategy is necessary only because of the systematic exclusion and degradation of anyone deemed "not White" in the eyes of the law. Syrians (which in the context of the article actually include people from Jordan, Palestine, and Lebanon as well) employ this strategy in an effort to obtain access to citizenship and its attendant privileges, but it is clear from the rulings that this access is limited to people who can also say they are Christian and light skinned. Gualtieri (2001) and Haney-Lopez (1996) both note that Whiteness is most closely linked to European ancestry. So while previous efforts on behalf of Middle Eastern people led to a legal designation as "White," a history of institutionalized discrimination (Shaheen, 2008) and violence (Abu El-Haj, 2006b) has led many Arab and Muslim people to describe themselves as people of color (Bayoumi, 2008), work in solidarity with other historically marginalized groups (AROC, 2015), and use counter-storytelling as a vehicle for challenging Islamophobia (Tabar, 2007).

It is for these reasons that this study utilized what Solorzano and Yosso (2002) call *critical race methodology*. Counter-narratives centralize the stories of people of

color and provide a remedy to the cultural deficit storytelling of the dominant narrative. Counter-narratives are themselves an act of resistance to domination and Solorzano and Yosso (2002) note that

> We define the counter-story as a method of telling the stories of those people Whose experiences are not often told (i.e., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform. (p. 32)

In addition, critical race methodologies center the interconnectedness of different types of oppression based on gender, class or religion and support social justice action in the service of an end to all forms of subordination. There are several types of critical race methodologies, including the creation of composite stories (Bell, 1987), however this study will be a collection of other people's stories placed within a socio-historical context (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

This methodology lends itself to this type of study because the ultimate goal is to recount positive stories about Palestinians that challenge the dominant narrative and provide a more complete picture of what it means to be Palestinian. Many people in the U.S. may intellectually know that stereotypes that make all Palestinians out to be terrorists are wrong, they still often do not connect emotionally with the struggles and triumphs of the Palestinian people. Otherizing continues when the dominant narrative is singular and the complexity of life for an entire people is essentialized and negative. Counter-narratives add accounts from a diversity of experiences to the dominant

discourse, and are a way of critiquing that master narrative through talking back. These stories then "can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 36).

Participants

For this study, I interviewed seven Palestinian young people between the ages of 12 to 20. I employed purposeful sampling in an effort to include a wide range of perspectives and experiences in the sample group. Young people were either former students, or youth with whom I have had professional contact either in education or through solidarity work in the Palestinian community. I included both boys and girls, Muslims and Christians. Participants will be purposively chosen based on a previous positive relationship, and none of the participants are currently my students, nor will they be in the future given the grade level that I teach and their age. However, the age and power differential between myself and the participants cannot be discounted. I have also maintained positive relationships with all participants and their families through sustained involvement in the school and the community, and my hope is that this continued familiarity allowed for participants to be open and honest. However, students may still have felt unable to be completely honest with me out of concern for how I may impact their standing at school or what I may share with families. I will make it clear to them that I am bound by rules about confidentiality and anonymity, however this may not have been completely believed.

I began by asking in person for permission from participants and developing a plan for interviews and focus groups based on the needs of participants. Once young

people expressed an interest in participating, I contacted their families to get permission for minors under the age of 18 to participate and required signed consent forms from both parents and participants. I asked them to sign consent forms for voice and/or video recordings, with the understanding that their anonymity will be protected and that the purpose of the recordings is to ensure accuracy. Given the nature of the research, as well as the depth and delicacy of the issues under examination—identity, assimilation, citizenship—repeated interviews were necessary to collect accurate data.

Data Collection

Data from interviews and focus groups was collected between September 2015 and January 2016. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in a variety of locations including my classroom at the middle school, local restaurants, and family homes. Young people were interviewed individually once for 2-3 hours. In addition, I conducted one 2-3 hour focus group with all of the students together. I ended with a final closing dinner at a local halal restaurant that included all participants. This final focus group was a chance for students to interact and add any final thoughts as well as hear my own observations and preliminary findings.

The first interviews took place in either my own classroom for those students who are still attending middle school or in the homes of families. I made sure to provide food for the students at each meeting in order to help to create a welcoming environment. Voice recordings of interviews and focus groups were made using my Apple Macbook laptop's imovie application. This was chosen for ease of use and well as its relatively unobtrusive nature. Students were informed that they were being recorded, but an open laptop on the table near our conversation seemed to have a minimal impact on responses.

Video recordings were not made as students in this age group often find video recording difficult when they are not able to manipulate and edit images, and since raw data is desired, voice recording only was preferable. I also took extensive field notes throughout the interviews and focus groups to ensure that if technological problems arose, data from affected sessions will not be completely lost. If a substantial portion of an interview or focus group was unrecoverable due to a technology issue, all possible efforts were made to make-up the time that was lost.

Data Analysis Procedures

Once data has been collected, I transcribed the individual interviews and focus group conversations. I used Dragon voice recognition software to aid in the transcription process of interviews and focus groups that will be voice recorded using the imovie application on my Apple Macbook laptop computer. I typed up my field notes during this phase of analysis.

I then read the transcripts and began the process of hand coding the data (Creswell, 2008) and looking for themes within the narratives. The coding process was be done on three large white boards within my classroom using color-coded markers to categorize data from each source into themed topics. I made connections between topics and combined those that are related to reduce the initial list of topics into a smaller number of more general themes. The data was described within these previously coded themes and an analysis of responses was then conducted. I then compared my final analysis to prior research in order to ascertain how it fits within the previous body of research. I also presented a draft of this final analysis to the participants for their review in order to further validate the findings. I reported findings in narrative form since the

data was collected in that form. This adds to the consistency of the findings as well as honoring the participants' stories.

Validity

The issue of validity is addressed in this research through the depth enabled by the small sample population. Through the use of a small sample, I was able to gather detailed and descriptive information about participants. I conducted interviews and focus groups multiple times over the course of several months to ensure that connections could be made among themes arising from the various participants. Respondent validation (Creswell, 2008) of the data is addressed by bringing the interview transcripts back to the participants for their final confirmation to ensure that they were not misquoted or misunderstood.

Researcher's Role

In my role as a researcher for this study I had both insider and outsider status. Because I grew up within the community where I conducted my research and interviewed students within that community, as well as the fact that I am a current resident and teacher at the only public middle school in my city, I bring an insider perspective to this research. I am much more aware of the context that Palestinian-American youth are navigating through in our local public schools than someone from outside would be. I have witnessed these dynamics both from the perspective of a student, and that of a teacher, and have seen how the situation has changed over time, which increases my understanding of nuances that may not be perceived by an outsider. However, I am not Palestinian myself, nor am I a Muslim. Though I teach about the occupation and Islam as well as work with many Palestinian youth and adults, I cannot ever truly understand what

it is to be Palestinian. I continually reminded myself of that fact to ensure that this research continued to be research *with* and not research *on* Palestinians. I could not become complacent because of the work I have done in the past and assume that I do not have to continually build and keep the trust of the youth and families that I am working with.

I also needed to repeatedly reflect on how my own lenses as both a teacher and a researcher were impacting the discussions and my analysis during the research process. The insider/outsider nature of the research was often problematic *for me* as I struggled not to comment on statements I disagreed with or share information from discussions with parents even when I thought it would be beneficial for students. Tension developed between my role as a researcher and my role as their teacher, coach and friend of their families. As a researcher, I wanted to hear their stories and amplify their voices, but as a teacher and friend who cared about their well-being, it was often difficult to refrain from inserting my own thoughts into the discussion—especially since students often asked me to do this. Finding a balance between being open and asking and answering questions while not influencing their own narratives was a constant struggle and was much more challenging than I initially thought it would be.

In addition, I needed to be cognizant of the power differential existing between the participants and myself. Students may have felt compelled to produce answers they believed I was looking for and concealed information they suspect may have earned my disapproval because of this power differential. I attempted to address this with students by acknowledging the power imbalance, reminding them that their participation was completely voluntary, and being transparent about my intention to produce research that

supports Palestinian-American youth in our local schools as well as the reality that their input was critical to the success of this project.

Limitations

The main limitations of this study are due to time and the researcher's outsider status. Due to the necessity of conducting research in such a short span of time, and the desire to collect deep qualitative data, this study was limited to a very small number of research participants. Only seven youths were interviewed using a combination of interviews and informal focus groups.

In addition, the outsider status of the researcher may skew the information participants are willing to share, given that the participants in the study are Palestinian and I am White. This is somewhat mitigated by the fact that I am a member of the community where I did this research and have a positive relationship with many people in the Palestinian-American community here, including the participants. It was also a concern that though participating youth are no longer in the classroom of the researcher, the age and power differential as well as interviews taking place in the physical space of the school may have hindered students' willingness to be completely open and honest. Differences regarding religious and gender norms may also be a factor in this research, though every effort was made to mitigate these issues. I purposively choose student participants because of a previous positive teacher-student relationship. I addressed concerns that could arise about mixed gender focus groups with families ahead of time so that it was clear that at no time were students in mixed gender groups without an adult being present. I also paid attention to religious time and dietary restrictions as well, as all of the interviews and focus groups involved food.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this research was for counter-narratives of Palestinian-American youth to disrupt the dominant discourse surrounding what it means to be Palestinian-American. There were three main questions under examination.

1. How are Palestinians living in the San Francisco Bay Area negotiating the space between being Palestinian and being American?

2. How does this negotiation affect youths' efforts to preserve Palestinian cultural ties and traditions?

3. How do Palestinian-American youth in the San Francisco Bay Area believe schools and/or teachers can support students of Palestinian descent in this process of negotiation?

These essential questions, guided our discussions throughout this research and over the course of the study, several themes became evident. While these themes will be more clearly connected to the research questions in chapter five, during the discussion of the data, I thought that it was important to let the words of the participants be the organizing force in this chapter, where the findings are described. This resulted in less alignment between the research questions and the data than I had originally anticipated. However, it was very important to me to honor my students' stories and allow them to drive interviews and discussions as much as possible. As a consequence, the findings are very grounded in students' experiences and where they are in their journey.

This chapter is divided into four main sections based on the themes that dominated the data: individual targeting, the negative portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in

general and Palestinians in particular in the American media and society at large, identity development, and the importance of education. The participants in this study reported relatively low levels of individual targeting, despite some differences in the description of that level. However, this stood in stark contrast to the overwhelmingly negative portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in the wider American media and culture. Students' personal identity development was another theme that became evident through the course of the research. Students often had difficulty integrating their Palestinian and American identities. The final theme that emerged during the research was the need for change in the way all Americans are educated about identity, race, and culture. Students in this study stated a belief that all Americans needed to learn about the world and learn to be more open-minded and had suggestions for how to move the American educational system forward in supporting students in the development of a positive transnational identity. This chapter begins however, with a more complete description of the participants in an effort to contextualize the data.

Participants

As mentioned previously, I utilized purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2008) in an effort to reach a diverse group of participants. I asked students, former students and people from the local Palestinian community that I know personally and who are familiar with my work both as a teacher and an activist. Most are former students or siblings of former students and one is a current student. Aaron, the only student still in my own classroom, is the child of friends. I had asked him to participate in this research in June of the previous school year and he and his family were enthusiastic about it. He would be in eighth grade during the process of data collection and I taught only seventh. However,

during the summer my teaching assignment was changed and Aaron was now in my class. His parents wanted him to stay in my class and still participate in the research so I did my best to keep the two things separate and be mindful of my position of power. Joseph is not in my class, but he is still a student at the school where I teach, so this was an additional consideration. Over the course of the research however, both boys became comfortable enough to volunteer to spend time in my classroom at lunch and both pushed for additional meetings with the other participants as well. Haneen is the only participant that I did not know prior to the start of the study. She was a friend of another participant, Layla, and she suggested that I interview Haneen. Layla thought that she would be interested in the goals of the research and thought that because she went to a different high school, she might add a different perspective.

Layla

Layla is a high school senior at a local public high school and is a Muslim. Layla is bright and hard-working and while she can be somewhat cautious and quiet, once you get to know her, she is quite loquacious. She has an older brother and a younger sister and is very family oriented. She places them at the center of her life, her decisions are based on things her parents would likely agree with, and she chooses to spend a majority of her time outside of school with her family. She acknowledges that she is different from her parents in some ways, but does not think these differences are significant or that they interfere with her ability to make her own choices.

She attended a religious school until middle school and then attended a public middle and high school. Her first choice for college is UC Berkeley, and she is likely to get in given her academic standing and extra-curricular activities. She did Tae Kwon Do

when she was younger and now runs track and cross-country for her high school. Her mother teaches Arabic and she helps by working with the smaller children. Her parents are both Palestinian however her mother was born in Lebanon and raised in Saudi Arabia. Her father comes from a prominent Palestinian family from a village just outside of Jerusalem and he has been back to visit relatively frequently but she has not been back since she was 5 or 6 years old because her father does not feel it is safe for the rest of the family to visit.

Layla is very focused on her studies and sees education as a key component of a more equitable society. She repeatedly referred to people who make racist or Islamophobic comments as "uneducated" and stated that people need to be more informed about Arab and Muslim culture if the cultural climate is going to improve and become more equitable. In addition, she thought that people in her own community also needed to be more educated about American society regarding feminism. She mentioned concern for families who adhered to rigidly defined gender roles and noted that this was something that made her family different. She also noted that while her mother and father did not conform to strict gender roles, there still were differences in how she and her brother were treated that she was uncomfortable with and that she would change some day when she had her own family. She said that she had very few points of conflict with her parents and that overall she felt more aligned with their values than those of the wider American society. This caused her to isolate herself from Americans that she felt would be hostile toward her or her culture. This also reinforced her belief that these people needed to be "educated" regarding how to be more inclusive and open-minded.

Dhalia

Dhalia is a high school freshman at a local public high school and is a Muslim. She does well in school and plans to go to college, though as a freshman, she still has no idea where that will be or what she wants to study. She has older brothers and her whole family are big San Francisco 49er fans. She is funny, outgoing and sometimes she speaks so fast you have to ask her to repeat things. She is never shy about expressing her opinion and is very outspoken. Her parents' families are both from Jeffa (Haifa), but her mother grew up in Jordan and her father grew up in Kuwait. They have not been back to Palestine because of safety concerns, but she has been to Kuwait and Jordan to visit extended family there.

Dhalia is a very strong and outspoken young woman. She is very proud of her heritage and calls people who make racist or Islamophobic remarks "ignorant." Like Layla, she also thinks that these people need to be educated in order to change their outlook, but rather than isolate herself, Dhalia is more likely to confront people who say negative things. She views it as her responsibility to be the one who educates them, and while she does admit that at times, "it's just too much," more often than not, she challenges negative comments. She also describes her values as more aligned with her parents than the wider American society and cites this as the main reason for her strong identification as Palestinian rather than Palestinian-American.

Nuha

Nuha is a freshman in college and is living in a dorm at a prominent California university and is a Muslim. She visits on major school breaks like Thanksgiving and between terms, but is not close enough for weekend visits. Nuha is a talented point guard

and played basketball growing up. She had lots of friends in elementary, middle and high school and is very hard-working and intelligent. Her family on both sides is from Khan Younis in Gaza but while her father was raised there, her mother grew up in Kuwait. She has not been back to visit Gaza because her father does not think it is safe but they have been back to Kuwait to visit her mother's family there.

Nuha has more to say about the topics under discussion than any other participant. While her age could provide more perspective than her younger peers, the site of her university, which is situated in a very rural part of California where she calls herself one of two Arabs on the entire campus of over 20,000, seems to be isolating for her and reinforces many of the negative images she has about Americans. She is adamant that she has not encountered any direct targeting at university, but it is clear when she describes her situation that it does bother her that she is so isolated from other Palestinians or Muslims.

Haneen

Haneen is often quiet, a good listener and a great observer. She is not afraid to speak her mind however, she simply does not need to be the only one talking all of the time. She attended an Islamic school through eighth grade before moving to a local public high school—a different one than the one attended by the other participants. She is a senior in high school and in leadership and plans to attend an elite university like UC Berkeley. Her mother's family is from Betlahim (Bethlehem) but she grew up in Jordan and her father's family is from a village outside of Ramallah called Yabrud. She and her family went back to visit in 2007, but her parents don't think it is safe anymore to go back.

Haneen is a Muslim and is also the only girl in this study who currently wears a hijab. She began to wear it in sixth grade when her school made it a dress code requirement for girls. She concedes that it made the transition to public high school challenging at first but explained that once people got to know her, they relaxed. She also noted that she made strong efforts when she first began high school to fit in and did not challenge every negative comment that was directed at her, but this has changed over the course of her years in high school. Now a senior, she still does not confront every comment in the hallway or on the street, but in class and in her position in school leadership, she does not shy away from discussions about equity, justice and Islamophobia—in fact she is often the one who is responsible for starting them. She has gone from a freshman who just wanted to be invisible to a senior who wants to be part of shifting the dialogue about race, oppression and justice in our schools.

Aaron

The thing Aaron wants more than anything in the world is to play in the NFL when he grows up. He plays quarterback right now and expects to get a full scholarship to an elite private high school because of his skills on the football field. He is a Muslim, and now in eighth grade and in addition to loving the San Francisco 49ers like the rest of his family and idolizing Cam Newton, he works hard in school, helps his father at his Italian restaurant, and says that if he can't be a football player, he wants to be a lawyer when he grows up so that he can help people. He is very talkative and has lots of friends, even though he moved to his current school only a year and a half ago. Aaron is in eighth grade at the school where I teach and is the only one of the participants in the study who is currently in my class. This happened because both his schedule and mine were

changed at the start of the year and while I considered dropping him from the research, he was very eager to participate. His father's family is from Jeffa but he grew up in Jordan and his mother's family is from a village outside Al-Quds (Jerusalem) but she grew up here in the United States, in San Francisco. Aaron has been back to Jordan to visit family there, but he has not been back to Palestine.

Aaron is the only participant who had a parent who was born in the United States. Aaron's mother was not only born in San Francisco, she grew up there and lived there all of her life until they moved into our school district two years ago. Aaron's father, like all of the other participants' parents, was born outside the United States and migrated here as an adult. This has had a strong impact on the family dynamics as Aaron's mother is much more aware of American cultural norms and expectations and is much more assimilated than Aaron's father. This sometimes proves challenging when negotiating expectations around school and work. At school, Aaron's closest friends are not Palestinian, and he does not describe close relationships with other Palestinians outside of school or within his family. His closest friend is Tongan and Christian and Aaron says they are friends because they are teammates and they keep each other out of trouble and working hard in school. He describes their relationship as one of brotherhood, calls his friend's house his second home, and his friend's parents are his second family.

Assim

Assim is outgoing, funny and loves video games. He works hard in school and gets good grades. He is not afraid to speak out in defense of himself, his culture, or his religion, Islam, and is very protective of his family. He looks up to his older sisters and is very social and has lots of friends. He is a freshman at a local public high school and

has no idea what he wants to do when he grows up but he definitely plans to go to college. His family is from Gaza but his parents feel it is too dangerous and difficult to go back to visit. Like many other students in this study, he has been to Kuwait to visit family that is living there but has not been back to Palestine.

Assim has two groups of friends. He has American friends of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds that he knows from school, and he has Palestinian friends that he knows from the mosque. He describes doing very different things with these two groups of friends and also describes very different feelings about them. He does American things like going to the mall and playing video games with his school friends and does more "Arab things" with his Palestinian friends like attending cultural or religious events. He says that he is close to both groups of friends but is definitely closer to his Palestinian friends because "they just get it." He tries to challenge the dominant discourse by bringing up current events and encouraging dialogue among his American friends despite reporting that this is frequently unsuccessful.

Joseph

Joseph is the only Christian participant in this study. He is a sweet, quiet boy who works very hard in school and gets along well with peers and adults. He plays lots of sports, including soccer and basketball and along with good grades is a well-rounded student. Currently he is in eighth grade at the local public middle school where I am a teacher. His parents are both from Ramallah, although his father grew up in Kuwait and met his mother on a visit with family back in Ramallah. Joseph and his family have been back to visit Palestine frequently and consequently he is more aware of the realities of the

occupation than most of the other students. He is also more emotionally connected to Palestine because of his deep, positive memories of family and friends on his trips back.

It is difficult to say how much his Christianity impacts his experience as a Palestinian-American student. Joseph presents phenotypically as much more White than the other participants, though the degree to which this impacts his experience is unclear. While other participants described being asked to explain their heritage to others or had others make assumptions about them being Mexican, Joseph did not experience this. He also did not describe his religion as in opposition to his identity as an American. Many students identified Christianity as an American trait—Americans are Christian was a common theme. Joseph however located his Christianity as part of his Palestinian identity and noted that "for Americans religion isn't really important but for us [Palestinians], it is."

Description of the Data

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, throughout the course of this research, four main themes became evident. The first had to do with incidents of harassment, targeting or microaggressions. Students reported the overall levels of incidents was low, but further questioning revealed differences in what constituted a low level as well as differences in actual levels of targeting among the participants. Student responses to this targeting is also described in this section. The second theme that became apparent during the research was the presence of an Islamophobic dominant narrative that permeates American culture, society, institutions and media. This dominant narrative produced particularly negative and one-sided portrayals of the Palestinian Occupation which are detailed in this section along with student assessments about whether this situation was

getting worse or getting better. Next, this chapter will address the theme of student identity development. How do students describe what it means to be American or Palestinian and how and to what degree are these pieces of themselves integrated or working in opposition to each other? Finally, this chapter will detail student suggestions regarding changes to educational policies and practices that could better support them in the development of a positive transnational identity.

Targeting

Targeting refers to incidents where students are specifically harassed or threatened verbally or physically. Some students reported individual targeting, and some reported being present for offensive jokes or comments directed at Arabs and Muslims. Several students did not feel that these comments were aimed at them specifically, only that they happened to be present when the offensive remarks were made. Most students reported that targeting was most likely to come from strangers or people at school who were not their friends, but two participants reported that their friends were the ones leveling Islamophobic remarks.

Only one of the respondents reported regular targeting, while the others mostly described targeting levels as low. None of the participants described physical abuse, and all but one characterized the frequency of incidents directed at them by peers, teachers or other adults as low. There were spikes in targeting after specific incidents in the news like the Paris attacks and the shootings in San Bernadino. For example Haneen mentioned an increase in "drive-by racists" who would walk up to her, say something mean, and then leave, but overall many students said that individual targeting from peers, teachers or other adults was a relatively small concern. Layla echoed the words of several

participants when she said "I haven't really had that encounter at my school." All also reported that while they often were outspoken when offensive things were said, sometimes they let things go. In Dhalia's words, "It just depends."

Differences among participants.

There were some differences in these levels, the description of what constituted a low level of targeting was lower for girls than it was for boys, excluding Joseph, who reported very low levels overall. Aaron and Assim both reported weekly instances of specific targeting which increased after Islamophobic reporting in the news was more pronounced or acts of terrorism received increased focus on the news. Girls characterized low levels of targeting as only a few times throughout their lives, with the exception of Haneen who wears hijab and described higher levels of targeting than any of the other participants—male or female.

Aaron and Assim both described instances of Islamophobia directed at them as commonplace if infrequent. Aaron said, "I've been made fun of being an Arab. Like 'Oh you're a bomber, you're a terrorist'." Terrorist is the most frequent epithet hurled at the participants as Assim relates being called that most frequently along with students bringing up 9/11, calling him an ISIS member, asking him "Why are you killing people?" or combining his name with the notorious criminal calling him, "Assima bin Laden." Assim also mentioned that often his friend's parents start conversations with, "I'm not trying to be offensive," or ask questions like, "What do your parents think about ISIS?" He also said, "They're not trying to be mean, but…I mean, I know they're just trying to find out…I don't know…I know it's not on purpose I guess. It's unintentional."

Assim and Joseph mentioned incidents that involved friends "joking" about racist or Islamophobic remarks. Both noted that the same boys, who they consider friends, repeatedly make offensive jokes about Arabs and Muslims in their presence. Joseph related, "I always laugh along with it but inside I'm like, 'That's rude'." Assim echoed this sentiment when he related that "friends just say stuff messing around" and that it is usually the same couple of kids that are responsible. He says it is the main reason he feels closer to his Palestinian friends than his American friends because "Sometimes when I'm hanging out with my American friends someone will just call me 'terrorist' or something and that *never* happens with my Palestinian friends. None of that, never."

Layla and Dhalia both said that they rarely encountered specific targeting. They did describe hearing about or being present when negative generalizations about Muslims, Arabs or Palestinians were voiced by others, and while they were offended, they did not think these comments were directed at them. Layla offered, "I know during 9/11 people will be like 'Osama bin Laden…people are terrorists' or whatever." She also noted that it seemed to be worse for boys when she said,

> A lot of guys go up to other Arab guys and they'll say something about being a terrorist. But girls have never said that to me. But a lot of guys do that to other Arab guys. Usually it's around 9/11. It usually goes away but that's when I usually hear it.

Layla also mentioned that while her friends don't say negative things about Arabs or Muslims, other kids at school do. She made a distinction between her friends and classmates in the IB program (an advanced course of study that earns participants college credit during high school) and a small group of kids who are not in that program at her

school when she noted that "They will post stuff on Instagram like about how America is the best country ever and every other country is blah blah blah. You know what I mean?" Dhalia echoes that while kids who make offensive jokes are not her friends, she sometimes hears other students saying things when she noted, "Some people will joke around with it and maybe I won't like it a little bit. And I'll tell them too. But it's not like I'm really mad at them cause I know they're just messing around."

Nuha described only one incident, but it was much more severe than anything any of the other students described. It involved not another student, but the parent of a good friend. She related that one of her closest friends in high school was an American girl, a White girl, named Kendall. She said that they spent lots of time together and on the day before the first day of her senior year, she was at Kendall's house making T-shirts for all of their friends to wear to school the next day. She had just come home from Kuwait, the Israelis had been bombing Gaza relentlessly for a number of weeks, and Kendall's dad decided that this was a good time to begin questioning Nuha about all of this. Nuha said he asked her "So what do you think about the war in Gaza?" She answered,

> Literally dude? What does that even mean? I don't know, it's terrible. I don't like to get into it with people like that. 'Yeah it's horrible, a bad thing'. He asked, 'Hamas says they're helping you guys, but I know you guys have a religion of peace, so I don't understand this fighting'. I said, 'Listen dude, If someone is trying to kill you, you're going to fight back. It's war. Would you say the same thing about America?' He was being really rude to me. So I said, 'Listen dude, my uncle's house got bombed last week, so nothing you have to say to me right now, means anything to me. And I started crying and I left.

She also said that she was "always asked if I hated Jews" which she found very offensive.

Haneen, the only girl I interviewed who wears the hijab reported decidedly higher levels of targeting than any other student in the study. Though she characterized the frequency of these incidents as low, when asked to be more specific the actual frequency was much higher than that reported by any of the other participants. Haneen also reported that not only does she receive mean comments and stares from people at school, but also outside of school, from strangers on the street. She related that, "Sometimes people will just come up to me and say mean things and leave. Just on the street. They just think that it's fine to just come up to me." She said this was especially evident after the attacks in Paris and San Bernadino.

Student responses to targeting.

Many students expressed that they do not always confront people who say negative things about Arabs or Muslims. For example Dhalia said, "Even if it's a joke, I don't like it…I will mention it like 'Yo hey, you have to calm down.' But sometimes I don't. It just depends." Haneen mentioned practical concerns when avoiding confrontation about offensive comments. She said, "I didn't want to make it an argument. I didn't want to make it that big of a deal. I was new. I wanted to make friends. I didn't want to get into it with people." She also noted that, "When I got to know people, it got better." Joseph spoke about his wish to keep things from getting out of control when he noted, "I don't want it to get bigger and bigger. I don't want a fight to break out." He also expressed resignedly, "They're not going to believe me. I know I'm right and they're wrong. So…" Aaron was more defiant, "You just eventually ignore it.

You just go along with it and you prove 'em wrong. You prove to everybody who said you can't do it, you prove them wrong by doing your best."

Initially the participants described low overall levels of targeting, yet upon further examination, the data shows that incidents of microaggressions are rather prevalent and students have clearly adapted a large variety of responses for dealing with these situations. While some confront incidents directly, many students describe finding it challenging to deal with every situation that arises head on due to sheer fatigue as well as a desire to just fit in and not talk about it all of the time.

The Islamophobic Dominant Narrative: The Media and White American Culture

All of the participants described frustration at the pervasiveness of the Islamophobic dominant narrative. Many students were using the terms American and White interchangeably, conflating American culture and White culture. While the dominant forms of American culture surely are synonymous with White culture, students did not acknowledge either the contributions to American culture by people of color or the possibility of redefining what it means to be American in a way that is more inclusive of the myriad contributions of people of color. In any case, some students said that American culture was the problem, while some cited the media, but all agreed with Haneen's assessment that "The media is disproportionate." Their concern is that there is an incomplete and highly negative picture of Arabs, Muslims, and especially Palestinians being painted for most of America. All of the participants shared that Donald Trump is the best example of this, though all agreed that he is not the only problem in this regard. When asked for examples of how Islamophobia is played out in the media, Haneen said of Trump, "He's insulted every race, every religion and what threw me off the edge was

when he imitated people with disabilities." While Dhalia said, "He's against everybody who is not a White adult man." Then Haneen added,

> It's him being smart. He's triggering the fear that everybody has. Yes there's one terrorist attack so he's going to make it seem like it's World War III coming up. Or when he attacks African Americans it's more than just…it's like Black Lives Matter is becoming bigger, they're more of a threat. And he's a Republican and that can't happen."

Many students described the hypocrisy that is evident in the word choices used to describe events by the news media and what is covered and what is not. For example Dhalia said, "I don't like what happened to Paris but how come people never mention what happens in Palestine or Syria or anywhere? That got me pretty mad." During our focus group discussion she also said that right after the attacks in San Bernadino, "an official guy was on the news saying, 'I don't think it was terrorists who did it. I think it was a White guy.' What? That word is only for Arabs? What?" Then Joseph added, "If it's a White guy he's mentally disturbed." And Assim continued, "Or if it's a Black or Latino guy it's gang related. It's so dumb." Aaron concurred adding, "White people, it would be different if they made a mistake. The first thing people would talk about if an Arab messed up it'd be like because he's an Arab he messed it up."

In her interview, when talking about media representations of Arabs and Muslims, Dhalia said,

> A lot of adults, which is sad, don't know this but there are good people and bad people in anything. Yeah, there are some bad Muslims, there are some good ones. There are some bad Christians and some good ones. But people only focus on

> Muslims as like they're bad so all of them are bad. I could go on and on about this. Like yeah there are good and bad. Osama bin Laden, 9/11 yeah he was a bad Muslim but then there are a bunch of good ones. And then like Hitler, terrible Christian, but people never judge all Christianity on one person but they judge all of Islam on one person and that's just not OK. You see it everywhere. Anytime there's a problem in the news, the first thing they will say if it's a Muslim or a Person of Color they'll call them a terrorist but if it's a White person they're like oh, he's depressed or he's crazy, he has mental problems. It's just not OK."

Nuha added that the media helps to create our basic understandings about ourselves and each other, "When you think of Italy you think of pizza. When you think of Egypt, you think of pyramids. When you think of Gaza, you think of war. People aren't familiar, so it scares them I feel like."

Joseph had a specific example related to news coverage after the attacks in Indonesia recently when he said,

> Me and my dad were watching the news and there was bombs and shootings in Indonesia last night. Kinda the same thing as Paris, same setup and stuff. And they haven't found out who did it yet. Four people died. They don't know who did it but right away they said ISIS. Me and my dad just looked at each other and were like how do they know it's ISIS if they haven't…it probably might be but the fact that they haven't figured it out last night…they might have this morning but it was just annoying how they just bring up ISIS right away."

He added that Americans, "think that the newscasters are always right. They might be, but the fact that they said it before knowing who did it bothered me." At hearing this

Haneen added, "I hope they realize that Indonesia is the country with the largest Muslim population. So if an ISIS attack happened there I hope they make a connection like 'Why would Muslims be killing Muslims?' I don't know though."

One-sided depictions of the occupation.

One of the most frustrating things for many participants is the almost universally negative and one-sided depictions of the occupation in Palestine. Students repeatedly noted that the news media's descriptions of what is going on align with the view of the Israeli government and it's supporters in the American government. Information that would show the human rights abuses suffered by Palestinians or paint Israelis in a negative light are avoided in favor of stories that highlight the negative dominant narrative that Palestinians are all violent terrorists.

Nuha provided an example of the contrast between her lived reality and the depictions of Palestinians in the media saying,

> A kid came up to me and told me, ' My mom said all the kids in Palestine want to do is fight.' I'm like 'All the kids in Palestine want to do is live dude.' I don't know what to tell you. Kids in Palestine aren't trying to fight. It's like the terrorist thing. Like oh they just want to be terrorists. They just want to fight. They're just aggressive. Why do you guys want to fight everyone? Literally I don't think anyone's trying to fight anyone in this situation. We're just…They're just trying to live and not be killed and not be bombed and not be massacred basically. It's a genocide. I don't know what else to tell you….It's an occupation. That's what I say. 'Cause it is. I don't know. Just how I see it is, I don't know…the Israelis kind of stole it. They came in and they stole it and they

took something that wasn't theirs and they called it theirs. And they're doing horrendous things. No one cares. No one pays attention. No one looks at it.

Joseph had a lot to say about this. He began by talking about his own experience when he visits Palestine,

> We have to go through a bunch of checkpoints to get into our country. Even just in our country. It's kinda scary 'cause you have to get out of the car and they have big guns and they ask you a lot of questions. They're just scary 'cause they're just staring at you in this weird way, mugging. They're mean to you but if they say anything mean to you you just have to deal with it."

He went on to discuss his frustration at assumptions that are made by the media,

> Every time there's a terrorist attack they don't even know who did it they just assume it's Arabs. It probably is Arabs they just don't know what we've been through. They (the news media) just say what the government wants them to say—and that's the U.S. liking Israel more than Palestine. People think we're terrorists but the thing about terrorists…so many things have happened to them they go out of control. They get brainwashed and then they just get so angry that they're not treating them the same way. We don't…I don't…our family doesn't believe in them doing that but when you get angry they think killing themselves is right, but it's not. When this is happening like for the past 100 years when all this is happening it passes down, passes down, passes down and these people are getting upset and they get brainwashed. They just think that killing innocent people is right because they killed us. So they're saying that if they killed us, we should kill them but that's not true. Some people make fun of Arabs for being

> terrorists, for doing bad things to other people but that's not who we are. We're nice people but no one gives us a chance to show who we really are.

Is the country moving in a positive or a negative direction regarding equity?

Some students felt that there was some evidence that these things were beginning to change, while others agreed but thought the pace of change was too slow. Other students felt that things seemed to be getting worse, not better and cited Donald Trump's popularity as a presidential candidate as evidence of this because as Joseph put it, "people are still agreeing with him." That statement got vigorous nods of agreement from the participants. And Assim stated that, "I don't watch the news because it's all wrong." Dhalia added that, "My mom is scared for me to wear hijab. She doesn't want me to. She's scared. She's forcing me to not wear it because she's scared of what will happen to me because of what the media is saying." After Dhalia mentioned this, Assim pulled me aside and told me a similar story about his mother, "

> My mom, she wears the headscarf. She loves it and always wants to wear it. But don't say anything, but if she drops me off at school or goes to Costco or something, she wears a beanie. I actually like when she does that because I'm scared for her too. If she goes to her friend's house she wears the headscarf but anything else she wears a beanie. It's bad because she's not wearing the headscarf but it's safer. Verbal or physical—anything. It's safer.

Several students were more hopeful about the direction things are moving however. Haneen noted that,

> In the State of the Union, Obama did mention that the way they cover…he said yes we do cover Muslims in a negative light and it has to stop. And then he went

> on to say its not just, its become more than just the media brainwashing people, now it's the political parties taking sides. And he's like, in order for America to be great again we *have* to eliminate that.

Layla added another hopeful example,

> This has nothing to do with Arabs but it's an example of how things are getting better. I'm watching this show, *How to Get Away With Murder.* The protagonist, when she's getting ready for bed, she took off her wig and she took off her eyelashes, her eyebrows, she wiped it all off, right. She was just this bare woman with like little hair on top. And I was just, swear to God, I was just like Woa, she just did that in front of everybody, she just literally showed everybody who she is. I was shocked. It was just so cool to see that. So I think that things are getting better.

She went on to add, "Shows, characters are more culturally, ethnically mixed. You see more Asians, more black people. And I think that's really cool. But I still have yet to see an Arab person."

Each student in this study found Islamophobia to be widespread throughout American culture, society and media. The negative dominant narrative about Arabs and Muslims and especially Palestinians and the Occupation was extremely frustrating. Students were particularly animated and upset when discussing Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump. Students disagreed about whether the situation in the United States was improving or not, but all were impacted by these negative dominant images which influenced their own personal identity development.

Identity Development

All of the students in this study found it challenging to develop a positive transnational identity that was integrated; that is, an identity that allows them to be fully themselves in most contexts. While many students described themselves as Palestinian-American and embraced both of these pieces of themselves, most found it challenging to really feel comfortable expressing themselves completely and some felt the need to keep these worlds separate. They felt Palestinian at home and American at school or some equivalent; what Sirin and Fine (2008) call parallel identities. Still others felt uncomfortable even using the term Palestinian-American, not necessarily because they did not recognize this in themselves, but because other people, other Americans, might not accept and appreciate their Americanness.

What does it mean to be Palestinian?

When asked how they would describe what it was to be Palestinian and how they preserved cultural traditions, answers were very similar. The first thing most students mentioned was the food. In fact the focus group began with several minutes about their favorite, and not-so-favorite Palestinian foods. The first thing Dhalia said was, "So how many people when Ms. Delaney asked you what makes you Palestinian said 'the food'?" The table erupted with a chorus of talking, each one agreeing and sharing their favorites at once. The sharing of food is central to Palestinian culture because as Joseph put it, "It brings people together."

Students all also mentioned the importance of the Arabic language in maintaining cultural ties. Even though not all students felt that their own Arabic skills were as good as they would like them to be, for example only two could read and write with much

proficiency, all thought that it was important to them and to their families that they continue to speak it. Joseph noted, "They always talk to us in Arabic" and Layla concurred saying, "The language, our dialect, is so important. And it's different from other places, like in Egypt." And Dhalia and Assim said the exact same thing in their separate interviews, "I think it's cool to be able to speak two languages."

All students mentioned family as a primary focus in their lives and the definition of what it means to be Palestinian. Each student was clear about how important their family was to them and they were not shy about sharing their feelings on this topic. Many students listed family as their number one priority and the most important part of being Palestinian. They described the importance of spending time together, of family celebrations, for religious holidays, simple gatherings, or weddings that drew together extended families. If food was the first thing participants mentioned when describing their culture, family was the thing they spoke about with the most emphasis and emotion. Joseph said, "Family is everything." And Haneen echoed this saying, "Family is what's most important, no matter what." Nuha was the most emphatic when she related that, "My parents saved us. They literally saved us. We could be dead now if they didn't come here. What else can I say?"

Many students cited their shared history of occupation and oppression as defining features of their Palestinian identity as well. Dhalia elaborated on this theme saying,

> The way that Palestine's had such a rough history with the occupation and the killing and everything. Just like…how do I word this…that's one really big difference from other countries. And the fact that on a map it doesn't say Palestine on it. Or in a textbook I can't find the flag anywhere in the back of the

> textbook where there's all the flags. And a major part of it is that a lot of people don't even know it exists. I'll be like 'I'm from Palestine' and people will be like, 'Where's that?'

Nuha voiced something very similar when she said,

> It's an occupation. That's what I say. 'Cause it is. I don't know. Just how I see it is… I don't know, the Israelis kind of stole it. They came in and they stole and they took something that wasn't theirs and they called it theirs. And they're doing horrendous things. And no one looks at it."

She also talked about invisibility when she said, "Being Palestinian, it kinda means being unknown, kind of being part of a dying breed. You have to explain yourself a lot. It's like you're an alien."

Most of the students said that religion played an important role in their lives and was central to their identity as Palestinians. This was true for Muslims and the one Christian student who participated and held even with Aaron who did not describe his family as particularly religious. Aaron said,

> The religion, I like it, because its not like really, really religious unless you want to be. Like you can be what you want. Like it's OK to believe in other things. So I've been with my friend to choir practice and it's beautiful and that's OK. So my grandma prays five times a day she does what true believers do…It's just not like I believe that Islam is the only religion. But that's one of the reasons I like it. I don't have to do everything my grandma does to be a Muslim."

All of the other students said something similar to Nuha when she said, "It's a beautiful religion, my religion."

Other things that were mentioned by many but not all students included celebrations, cultural dress and the need for modesty, music, debkah (a traditional Palestinian dance), the Palestinian flag, and olive trees as significant cultural touchstones. Assim's thoughts were representative of the group when I asked him how he was connected to his culture he said,

> Everything. My name, my religion, what I eat, what my mom makes for dinner, what I wear when I go to prayer, my flag, my knowledge of my culture. There are a lot of basic things with me that are connected to it.

What does it mean to be American?

When asked to describe what it means to be American, many students described an experience that was very similar. They talked about the food and the clothing, and the daily lives of Americans. It also became clear that often when they described Americans, what they really meant was White Americans. Occasionally students would include students of color in their description of Americans, especially when talking about music or American dress, but often students would locate students of color, regardless of race and ethnicity as outside of the definition of American and when asked who is American students would answer, "White people.

Dhalia, Layla and Assim noted that Americans have a "dress code" that is less conservative than their own. As Layla related, "When it's hot…it's like, the girls, they cannot wear pants. They will die if they wear pants. Like it's legit." But more than anything else they described an attitude that made Americans different. Nuha said, "Americans don't look outside themselves…they don't open their minds." She also added that she "didn't want to live in an American bubble." Assim and Nuha both also

mentioned the silence of Americans in the presence of racism that was troubling. Both described friends who were present when Islamophobic or racist remarks were directed at them or others and who said nothing. Nuha mentioned that during the incident where her friend's father was verbally attacking her, her friend just said, "Daaad, stop. And she got her mom, but that was it. She didn't stop him." Nuha also added that she noticed that her friend posted things on social media that seemed to agree with her father's position, even though in the moment she acted like she disagreed with him. She explains that she thinks her friend thinks of Nuha and her family as different from other Palestinians or Muslims, "We're an exception to her." Nuha, Assim and Joseph also described the American attitude of unquestioned loyalty to the government and uncritical consumption of the media. Joseph exemplified this position when he noted that Americans, "Agree with what's on the news." Assim called this a different "mindset" and wished that Americans could be more "open." Nuha went further when she said, "Being American means supporting the government."

Layla, Dhalia, Nuha, and Assim all described feeling excluded from American culture by Americans. They all described being unsure that other Americans would agree to admit them into American citizenship. Layla gave an example of this when she said, "I don't celebrate a lot of the traditions…I don't really care for July 4th…then again I'm thinking of Christmas and Easter, that's more Christian. Well, it *is* Christian but it's weird how it's extremely…when I think of Christmas and Easter I think of Americanism. Even though we don't live in a religious country, it's extremely broadcasted as *the* tradition." Many of the students viewed these two cultures as in conflict with each other

or in some sense separate while others did not, and these differences impacted the development of their own identity.

Conflictual, Parallel and Integrated Identities

Sirin and Fine (2008) used the terms *conflictual, parallel* and *integrated* to describe the different way the students in their study view and move through the world. *Conflictual* refers to students who view their American and Palestinian selves to be in opposition or in conflict in some way. *Integrated* refers to students who have integrated the two sides of themselves mostly or completely, while *parallel* refers to students who do not view these cultures as in conflict but as separate, and these students tend to live separate lives, one at home and one at school.

Many students explained that they found it difficult to describe themselves as Palestinian-American. Dhalia even said that she does not use that word at all and describes herself as Palestinian only. She explained,

> I never say I'm American. Some people say Palestinian-American. I don't say that. I say Palestinian. I'm just really proud of being Palestinian and I don't follow much of the American ways and I don't want it rubbing off on me too much. I wanna like, stick to my roots kind of thing.

Layla said that while she was both, "I definitely think that my Palestinian side is more important. But I cannot hide the fact that I am also American." Nuha added to this saying, "I don't feel like I belong here. I was born here, I was raised here, my passport has an American flag on it. I am (American) but I'm not sure I want to be." She also added that she didn't feel accepted by the country as a whole, "People don't consider me American."

Some of this unease with their American side comes from the Islamophobia in the wider culture, as described earlier in this chapter. But it also comes from different views about what it means to be American. For the students in this study, American was often synonymous with White. This meant that they were excluded from membership as Americans, whether they were born here or not. They did not have examples of Americans who were Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim and who were also accepted as American. Several students also said that Americans are closed-minded and not very inquisitive. Nuha said, "Americans believe in everything the government does. People don't open their minds. It just means supporting the government all the time and I don't support the government all the time" and Joseph added that, "The news is always right for them." Over and over when I asked students who these Americans are that they were speaking about, many students said, "White people."

Many of them also spoke about the challenges of having [White] American friends. All of the participants said that they had good friends who were not Palestinian or Arab, but several also said that those friendships felt different and not as close in some intangible way. When talking about her Arab friends Layla said,

> We can talk about everything because we're in the same exact boat. I don't have to explain anything to them. We all understand each other. Whereas my school friends…I've had to explain why we do this or whatever. When I'm with my Arab friends I just feel like they're more like my sisters.

When thinking about her best [White] American friend she said, "We are really close but it's just a little different. I've explained things to her but it's just different. I don't

exactly know what the difference is but there is a difference…I cannot really open up." She continued,

> I think it's the religion. I just realized that. I think people who are Arab and not Muslim still get more than people who are neither. One of my really good friends is Arab but not Muslim but if I tell her something she will totally understand.

Dhalia described similar feelings about being with other Arabs when she noted, "The atmosphere felt more close. There was more of a connection when we were at each other's houses."

Joseph reported feeling comfortable with both his Palestinian and American identities. He described how important both of these things were to him and how he could not simply use one word to describe himself and not the other. He was Palestinian-American because, "Family, the culture, the way we live life. Deep down even though I'm not from there I still have a connection with them. Obviously I feel like I'm American as well because I live here. I know more about it than Ramallah, but I consider myself both." He did admit to sometimes "forgetting" about his Palestinian self when he is playing soccer with his American friends, or not always feeling completely at ease with the families of his [White] American friends, but overall Joseph was the most comfortable with calling himself Palestinian-American.

Aaron and Haneen also felt like their Palestinian and American identities were well-integrated. While Aaron understood that there were differences, he was able to see the benefits of both and was grateful to be both. He noted,

> It's a lot easier for me, because I know the language. I speak English fluently because I was born and raised here. And I'm bilingual, so that will help with

> getting jobs and stuff later. And financially it's a lot easier here. Americans don't have financial problems like back home. They do, but not like back home where you can't work and everybody's poor. It's a lot easier here.

Haneen was matter of fact about the practicalities that made it better to be both. She said,

> It's safer here, the education and job situation is better here. And I'm born and raised here. This is what I know. I know I'm both. I know I'm not the same as my family that still lives there. I'm good with that.

Assim reported that, "It's cool to support two flags and two countries, eat two kinds of food, wear two kinds of clothes, speak two languages. Two of everything. It's cool to be different, I think." He did add, "Other than the racism, being different is cool."

A positive transnational or transcultural identity as described by Suarez-Orozco (2004) would most closely align with an integrated identity as defined by Sirin and Fine (2008). As identity is constantly being redefined, most of the students in this study did not fall discretely into one category, but at different times fell into different categories.

Proposed Changes to Education

At first, when students were asked what needed to change and how that change might be accomplished, many of them said nothing. I was rather surprised to hear this, especially since many had also described incidents of targeting and problems with the way Arabs, Muslims, and Palestinians were depicted by the dominant American narrative. After more questions, it became clear that there were different reasons for this answer.

Some students admitted that they had never been asked this question before and they had just never thought about it. It took them time to process their thoughts and

decide how best to answer. Layla's sentiments were shared by Nuha, Assim and Dhalia when she said, "I don't know. I mean…I never really thought about that before. Wow! I guess I should." By the time we met again as a group, each of these students expressed that they had been thinking about these questions and they were eager to share their new thoughts on the topic. Haneen and Joseph's issues seemed to be more about discomfort with me and wariness about sharing information that they deemed sensitive. This is understandable given that I had never had either of them in my class and thus the relationship with them was newer. For both of them, I spent more time sharing my own experiences and working to build trust and when I came back to those same questions later in the interview, they both seemed more comfortable and had more to say. Six of the seven students had specific ideas about what needed to change, but the common denominator for a solution was better education. They all expressed some form of a belief that Islamophobia stemmed from ignorance and so that was the logical place to start to change things. Aaron did not ever answer these questions, either in the individual interview or the group discussion, but during the group discussion, he did express that he agreed with ideas that were proposed by others in the group.

The participants mentioned the need for the wider American public to be more educated about other cultures. They included themselves in this group and expressed a wish that the curriculum was more diverse and representative of all of the different people, religions and cultures in the United States. Some mentioned the need for topics to be taught by a neutral teacher who didn't single out one person or group of people as more or less important or valuable. Many also noted the need for Americans to be more generally open and to think more critically about the information they are given by the

news media, social media, popular culture, or even in school. Several also said that far too many Americans are silent about oppressive situations and this silence was seen as a large problem as well as a sign that Americans just don't care about other people.

All students expressed an interest in learning more about the Palestinian Occupation in school, but most added that they simply wanted to learn about anything different from the dominant White culture. Nuha said that she was tired of learning about the same things year after year,

> Teachers always just talk about the same things over and over—the Holocaust, war, slavery. It's so much about the Holocaust. It's important, I get it, but other things are important too. And if it's current teachers will talk about it, like we talk about stuff to do with African-Americans and gay rights issues all the time. But that's it. There's a whole world, there's other things.

Layla noted, "One day on the anniversary of the Armenian genocide we learned about that, but then we never talked about it again." And Assim made a similar point, "We have lots of Mexican kids at our school, but we never learn anything about Mexico. And it's right there next to us, why don't we learn about Mexico? They should teach about a lot more stuff in school, not just Palestine." Several times students described differences in classrooms that were based on the backgrounds of the teachers. Again students often used coded language like using the word *diverse*, when what is meant is *not White*. Layla explained,

> The other English teacher, she is from Cambodia. She comes from a more diverse background while Mr. White has lived in New York his whole life. We've literally sat in the room for a whole month talking about marriage rights and Kim

> Davis and the Republican side of the presidential elections and Donald Trump and nothing else.

Most of the students also mentioned the need for Americans to think more critically about the information that they receive and to be more open to learning about different cultures, religions and people. Nuha said, "Americans don't look outside themselves. They don't open their minds. We should know every side of a story." Several students also echoed Nuha's thought that these subjects should be taught by someone neutral, "It should be objective, not taught by someone with preconceived ideas about one side or another. Kids should hear the whole story." As Dhalia noted, "Schools should be neutral to everybody."

Many participants also found the silence of Americans about oppression to be troubling and problematic. Nuha said, "It doesn't affect them so they don't care." She added, "No one cares. No one pays attention." Assim echoed this sentiment,

> Sometimes I will talk to friends about current events. I know they didn't hear about it but I bring it up anyway. I talk to friends about it. And I know they feel bad but they don't really care. It doesn't affect them so they don't really care. They feel bad for a day but they'll get over it. If it doesn't affect them they won't feel bad, they won't remember. Unless it happens to them or their family, then they'd probably make it a huge deal and not stop talking about it. If they cared they would be grateful for what they have and care that kids are dying and talk about it.

He also said that when one of his friends makes an offensive comment, the rest of his friends are silent about it. He explained, "They don't laugh. Nobody laughs. They don't think it's funny. They just move on. Nobody says anything."

Conclusion

Four main themes became evident in the data analysis. The first was the participants' assertions that individual targeting based on ethnicity or religion was low. There were some differences in these levels based on the gender of the participants, but overall most participants described individual targeting incidents leveled by peers, teachers or other adults as a relatively infrequent occurrence. Students did however describe the strong importance and extremely frequent occurrence of negative targeting of Arabs and Muslims and especially Palestinians in the media and what they described as either "White" or "American" culture. Many were especially frustrated by the way the occupation is covered by the media. All found this to be very challenging and a barrier to successful positive transnational identity development. While several students described their identity as fairly well integrated and used the term Palestinian-American to describe themselves, the majority had difficulty calling themselves American even though they had been born and raised in the United States and had not been back to Palestine at all. These students described separate selves at home and at school or with peers who were not also Palestinian. The final theme that emerged was the need for what students called "the education of others." This took several forms, and included the need to shift the general dialogue in the wider culture so that individual students and families were more culturally sensitive and aware, additional direct instruction about Arabs, Muslims, Palestine, and other religions and cultures more broadly, as well as a need to create

educational systems that emphasize critical thinking, general openness and acceptance of difference. Ultimately students felt that people who were educated and open and who could think critically, would not make the choice to target and harass others and would then be able to change the institutions in American society that oppress different groups of people. They cited recent gains made by the LGBT community and the #Blacklivesmatter movement as evidence that when people become aware of problems, they move to change things. They were not all hopeful that this would happen, many thought change was happening too slowly or not at all, but all felt that education was important for any possible future change.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summary

The purpose of this research was for the voices and experiences of Palestinian-American youth to challenge the dominant discourse surrounding what it means to be Palestinian-American. There were three main questions under examination.

1. How are Palestinians living in the San Francisco Bay Area negotiating the space between being Palestinian and being American?

2. How does this negotiation affect youths' efforts to preserve Palestinian cultural ties and traditions?

3. How do Palestinian-American youth in the San Francisco Bay Area believe schools and/or teachers can support students of Palestinian descent in this process of negotiation?

The first two questions were the focus of much of the research as I attempted to delve deeply into the ways in which Palestinian-American youth complicate their own understanding of their identities in contrast to the dominant discourse, while the final question is an attempt on the part of the participants and myself to try to forge a path forward.

The major findings of this research clearly show that Islamophobia as well as other forms of oppression, like sexism, xenophobia, homophobia and racism for example remain a corrupting moral obstacle in American society. As shown in the data in chapter four, students in this study experienced many incidents of aggression both individually and from the larger society. It is clear from their testimonies that the interlocking systems of oppression became a major impediment toward the development of an

integrated personal identity (Sirin & Fine, 2008) for the students in this research. Students felt so attacked by the dominant Islamophobic discourse that many were unwilling or uncomfortable with calling themselves American. That children born in America cannot describe themselves as American because of the pervasiveness of institutionalized racism and Islamophobia which seeks to exclude them at every opportunity, is a major failing of the promise of equality that many in America hold so dear. If we are to live up to that promise, all Americans, but most especially White Americans, must work harder to educate ourselves and all children in a more open and inclusive manner which seeks to understand and celebrate difference *as well as* the many things we have in common.

Discussion

In the following section I will analyze the findings of the research through the lens of the research questions that guided this study. The first two questions delve into how students are moving through the world and the challenges and beauties of living at the intersection of multiple identities. The final research question is an attempt to look to the future and use critical problem-solving skills in order to forge a path forward that is more inclusive and supportive for students of Palestinian descent.

Research question 1: How are Palestinian-American students in the San Francisco Bay Area negotiating the space between being Palestinian and being American?

One of the most striking findings in this study was the mismatch between students' descriptions of incidents of targeting and the actual incidence of events. When asked directly, students reported low levels of targeting, but as the interviews wore on, it

was clear that students were experiencing this more often than they were reporting. It is unclear whether this was because they did not understand that what was happening could be considered targeting, or whether they simply did not wish to describe it as such. This could be related to the previously described discomfort students seemed to feel regarding my whiteness, or it could be due to the way I initially phrased the questions about targeting. (I usually waited until a student brought up a specific incident and then asked how often similar things happened. Students may have been describing a particularly bad incident and felt that similarly bad incidents were infrequent while overall incidents were low.)

It seems clear from the data described in chapter four however that what these students were experiencing were microaggressions (Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2002), whether students chose to use this language or not. Many students reported questioning about their religion or ethnic background when meeting parents of White friends, questions that they did not get when they met parents of friends of color—whether they were Arab or not. Many also reported an increase in questioning by peers, strangers, and adults after the attacks in Paris and San Bernadino. Students also noted the increase in nationalistic and Islamophobic comments by peers around the anniversary of 9/11, both at school and on social media. Layla described kids responsible for these remarks as "uneducated" and Dhalia used the word "ignorant" or minimized responsibility for their comments noting that students were "just messing around." Assim tried to downplay the intentions of a friend's father saying, "He doesn't mean to be mean." It is clear from these comments that others were creating a climate of hostility and that the students in this study were also getting the message that because negative comments were not always

intentionally crafted in order to hurt them, that they did not have the right to be upset or offended which is an example of the insidiousness of microaggressions.

Nuha and Assim also brought up the troubling silence of White friends in the face of these microaggressions, which is a common problem. As Sensoy and DiAngelo (2012) note, it is one of the characteristics of privilege that members of privileged groups can choose when to engage about oppression and when to opt out and remain silent. White people are often silent in the face of oppression, and we need to be cognizant of what that silence means. It means that we are agreeing with that oppression and support what is happening. And if we do not want people to make those assumptions about our motives and feelings, then we need to refuse to be silent. This means not just speaking up when it is easy, but also when it is hard. Students in this study were gravely impacted by both the individual and collective silence of White people. On a personal level, students had difficulty forming strong bonds of friendship with White peers. While on a larger scale, White silence meant that when people like Ted Cruz suggested that all Muslim neighborhoods be subject to increased police patrols, students assumed that most White people agreed with that statement.

Another finding in this study is not so surprising, and that is that Islamophobia and racism are pervasive in American culture and media. As discussed earlier in the literature, this phenomenon has been widely documented by not only those examining Islamophobia (Shaheen, 2001) but also those looking at other forms of oppression like racism and sexism (hooks, 1996). The students in this study found the prevalence of this troubling and in my estimation this had a significant impact on students' ability to describe themselves as American. There was a strong feeling among participants that

somehow Americans were essentially different from themselves. So that although they rejected the dominant narrative that all Palestinians were terrorists, they had still absorbed the underlying binary construct described by Said (1978) that being American and being Palestinian were diametrically opposed and conflicting identities. Different participants had internalized this construct to varying degrees, but all seemed to be impacted by it. This is consistent with Abu El-Haj's (2009a) findings as well when she notes that

> for young Arab Americans from immigrant communities, the sense that they are not American and that they do not belong here is partly an outcome of the position in which their communities have been placed in relation to the current war on terror (p. 278).

She went on to describe the impact of negative experiences on these youth. "These experiences continually reinforced the idea that Arab and Muslim identities are incompatible with American identity" (Abu El-Haj, 2009a, p. 278).

This highly negative dominant discourse has been internalized to some degree by not only the wider society, but the students in this study as well. This constant negotiation and tension between being Palestinian and being American can have the aforementioned negative impact on student identity development, but it can also lead to the development of new constructions of what it means to be Palestinian-American. Despite these challenges, the students in this study are re-creating what it means to be Palestinian-American every day. Many students in this study could be described by Sirin and Fine (2008) as living with parallel identities. As discussed in chapter two, when applied to the students in this study, it means that many students have a Palestinian

identity at home and an American one at school. However many students are already on the path toward an integrated identity (Sirin & Fine, 2008) wherein students are able to integrate the multiple pieces of their identity. For the students in this study, their desire to change how the educational system works and their emphasis on multiple ways of learning and funds of knowledge are examples of their ability to serve as a bridge between different communities and cultures in an effort to change and strengthen both (Maalouf, 2000). Similarly, a transnational identity (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco & Todorova, 2008) enables people to move easily between cultures and communities, code-switching and providing models for others who are similarly situated. In this research, the students understood that they sometimes did this, but had not thought about how important a skill this was or how often they relied upon it.

Students also did not know themselves how much of their opposition to the idea of an integrated identity was due to their status as minors. Haneen expressed the thought that "things would be different after high school." She said she felt somewhat hampered by expectations and norms regarding high school behavior and thought that this would change after graduation. Others agreed and seemed to believe that another part of the problem was that they did not know of anyone who successfully navigated multiple spaces and hoped that a model in the form of new kinds of people would be more likely to be found in college. Nuha, the one participant who was already in college, said she felt more isolated at her university than she did in high school because of the comparative lack of diversity as well as the distance from home, family and friends. She was also one of the students who would have been described as more conflictual (Sirin & Fine, 2008), however she expressed a keen desire to meet activists working on issues around racial

justice and equity. Her identity, like most young people, and certainly the other young people in this study, is still in flux and is constantly being renegotiated.

Research question 2: How does this negotiation impact youths' efforts to preserve Palestinian cultural ties and traditions?

The students in this study have already developed what Sánchez (2007) calls *cultural flexibility.* As mentioned in the literature review, that is the ability to be able to successfully navigate two different contexts. Sanchez describes this as a relatively privileged position that can allow students to examine their own positionality and privilege while still developing an integrated transnational identity. Students are re-creating what it means to be Palestinian, what it means to be American, and what it means to be Palestinian-American. Students in this study understood that their position as Americans gave them advantages that their family members back in Palestine, Jordan and Kuwait did not have. They noted especially economic and educational advantages. They also understood that their version of what it meant to be Palestinian was not the same as that of their family who still lived there. When I asked the group whether they could ever see themselves living in Palestine, several said they weren't sure that they could "make it." Joseph and Assim both worried that they were so used to things here in America that they would not be able to live in Palestine long-term though they liked the idea of long visits of several months during the summer. At some point in their interviews, all students noted the difference between themselves and their family members still living in Palestine. They did not express this difference with sadness or anger, but simply as a fact. They acknowledged that while in America they often felt more Palestinian, in Palestine or even Kuwait or Jordan, they felt more American. They

understood on a practical level that they were something different; they were Palestinian-American. Students understood this to mean that they had a responsibility to leverage the privileges gained by their American citizenship in service of their families and others still living under occupation in Palestine.

The data clearly shows that microaggressions and Islamophobia pose an impediment to the development of a strongly integrated personal identity for Palestinian-American youth. Students in this research were still in the throes of navigating and creating their own identities, and the negative messaging they were getting from the society as a whole as well as individuals within it left many students unable to believe that they would ever be accepted by others as American. This led to the understandable feeling expressed by several students that they did not wish to even see themselves as American. Many wished to distance themselves from a people, government and society that they saw as universally White and Islamophobic. Students often were able to make connections to similar patterns of oppression experienced by women or African-Americans, and described feeling fortunate that they lived in a diverse community, where diverse was code for not completely White. However, when they spoke of Americans, they almost always meant White people, which is an example of how much of the dominant binary narrative of us versus them students had internalized. They not only located themselves as outside what constituted being an American, but African-Americans, Latinos, and other people of color were similarly located. And while this positionality is often a reality based on the current constructs of the institutions in the United States, and perfectly understandable that students should think this way, it is nonetheless disheartening that they do not see themselves as Americans. Just as they are

redefining what it means to be Palestinian as part of a new generation, born and raised in the diaspora in the 21st century, they are also redefining what it means to be American along with many other communities of color. They are living examples that disrupt the negative dominant discourse about who they are and what American means. Yes, many Americans are White, but many are also black, Muslim, LGBT, deaf, mixed, poor, native Spanish speakers, Poly, undocumented, indigenous, and neurodivergent. It is important to acknowledge the reality of oppressive systems, but we must also acknowledge the diversity of people who are and who have been throughout history, pushing back against those oppressive systems in an effort to dismantle them. My students are redefining what it means to be American, but this is not a new practice. It may seem new to one who has only just recently opened their eyes to a new critical lens, but kids need to know that they come from a long line of resistance. They need to know that they are the creators of their identity, and that they ARE American, whatever anyone else says. And they have the right to demand that the country where they were born reflects their lived reality and their dreams and aspirations.

Recently, during a classroom discussion about laws that violate human rights, we were brainstorming examples and while several students mentioned laws banning marriage equality or gender-neutral bathrooms, or laws separating families with undocumented members, one student cited miscegenation laws. Most students were not familiar with these laws, or the fact that they were so recently abolished. One student with one Black parent and one White parent who had been listening intently said very quietly, "So you're telling me that my family was illegal?" This question gets to the heart of this research when it comes to questions of identity. On the face of it, the answer

to the student's question is, yes. At one time in American history, her family would have been deemed illegal. But that is not really what she was asking me and the rest of the class. She was asking whether her family was as good as everyone else's. She was asking whether her family was valued and important. She was asking if they had the same human rights as any other family. So the answer is no, of course your family has never been illegal. Women are not inferior to men. And Palestinians are not terrorists. We cannot deny the realities of a given situation, but we do not have to accept that these realities are just or permanent. In fact we have a moral responsibility to disobey laws which conflict with human rights and human dignity and to push back against societal constructs which debase and dehumanize different groups of people.

In an effort to disrupt the oppressive societal conditions that students find themselves in, the final research question is a forward-looking attempt to address the needs of students of Palestinian descent. It endeavors to describe the supports that students are receiving now while suggesting long and short-term changes for a more equitable future.

Research question 3: How do Palestinian-American youth in the San Francisco Bay Area believe schools and/or teachers can support students of Palestinian descent in this process of negotiation?

The majority of students in this study were unable to describe many examples of how the development of their identity was supported in school. They noted that this was true of most people who were not White, as White culture and identity was normalized according to participants. They expressed a desire to learn more about their own cultural heritage, history and identity, but they noted that this should be offered to all students.

While participants desired a curricular shift, they also expressed an even more ardent hope for a pedagogical shift that emphasized transparency, openness, dialogue, discussion and disruption. They also hoped for more spaces like the ones we created during our research where students could come together and support each other and discuss issues of social justice and social change.

Students in this study expressed repeatedly the need for a more inclusive curriculum and pedagogical practices. Students wanted to spend more time in school learning about their own cultural heritage as well as that of their peers, and developing their own identities both as Palestinians and as Americans. Many scholars have stressed the importance of a multicultural curriculum (Camarrotta, 2009; Chang, 1993; Sensoy, 2009) that reflects the diversity present within American society and an increasingly globalized world. Still others have stressed the importance of a transformative pedagogy (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Freire, 1970) in addition to curricular changes. The data here supports the idea that both curricular and pedagogical changes are necessary in K-12 public education in the United States. According to the students in this study, there is a strong desire to learn about their own culture, as well as other cultures and religions and people from around the world and within their own classrooms. But just as important is the development of a critical mindset that is open to new ideas and possibilities and which questions and critiques the dominant paradigm in dialogue with others and seeks to shift material conditions in the direction of social justice. Students should seek knowledge of the world, but also seek transformation—both of themselves and the world.

One possible avenue for transformation includes the creation of what Solorzano, Ceja and Yosso, (2000) call "counter-spaces" (p. 70). The authors explain that, "These

counter-spaces serve as sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained." They add that these spaces enable students, "to foster their own learning, and nurture a supportive environment wherein their experiences are validated and viewed as important knowledge…to vent their frustrations and get to know others who shared their experiences of microaggressions and/or overt discrimination." Students need not only a safe space as described above, but a space to challenge and change the dominant paradigm. Over the course of this research, the students and I co-created one of these spaces. This was not planned, but grew organically out of the process of research itself. Many of the students who participate in this study knew each other, or knew each other from school or through extended families, however most would not have considered each other friends. They admitted that they rarely thought about or discussed many of the topics under discussion and were not aware that affinity groups like the one we created even existed, either within their community or in others. Students expressed an interest to keep talking about all of these issues and noted that often when they were interviewed, either alone or in a group, they went home and couldn't stop thinking about things. Families also noticed this and more than one parent expressed gratitude at the space created for student discussion as well as the increase in student interest in their own family history and culture at home. After the formal end of the data collection period of the research, the group meetings continued, as did talking, texting and social media contact among the participants. Several students ask me regularly when our next meeting will be, and are energized by the discussions as well as the ideas for social justice activism that are beginning to take hold. Our intention going forward is to regularize the

space and expand to include other students so that the group and its activities continue regardless of involvement by any one person. There is a need to ensure that the group continues on as individual members go off to college or move away and that members can continue to rely on each other even as they move on to transform new places and spaces. Building a community in the classroom is very important for ensuring student success. I stress this not only with my students who are kids, but also with my teaching credential candidates. We must be a community of learners invested in each other's success if we are to ensure that nobody is left behind and every learner is valued. This group epitomizes this ideal and has great potential moving forward because we are all educating each other and ourselves and interested in taking action in order to help create a more equitable future for everyone.

Recommendations

My recommendations as a result of this research are several and are based largely on the ideas proposed by the students who participated in the study. First, further research should include families and a more varied range of students living in Northern California in order to more accurately reflect the diversity of experience present in the Palestinian-American community here. Second, there needs to be more emphasis on inclusive curriculum and pedagogy in the K-12 educational system in the United States. Third, there needs to be ongoing professional development and support for anti-oppressive education within the American educational system.

The logical next step regarding research would be to conduct interviews of a more diverse group of students and which includes information gathered from their families—especially extended families in the United States, Palestine, and other parts of the

diaspora. My intention prior to the start of this study had been to include a wider array of participants in my sample. Given the time constraints of the data collection period, scheduling became a barrier to the inclusion of a more diverse group of participants. Future research should include more Christians, students who might not be doing as well academically or who had more experience with the disciplinary system during their educational career, students of mixed racial or ethnic heritage, students who were not born in the United States, and more older students. All of these factors may impact the data, but this last especially so as it was unclear even to participants how much their feelings of unease relating to identity had to do with their status as minors.

The curriculum and pedagogy in use in K-12 schools in the United States needs to be more explicitly anti-oppressive. For example, students need to be able to use the language of human rights (Tibbits, 2005) to identify violations and work to deconstruct oppressive systems. The students in the study correctly noted the hypocrisy of language used by the media when talking about Muslims and non-Muslims that is very similar to that described by Said (1997). He explains that Muslims involved in mass shootings are described as terrorists, while White men who do so are called criminals. The students in this study update this terminology when they lament that only Arabs or Muslims can be called terrorists while everyone else is said to be mentally ill. This double speak must be identified if it is to be dismantled.

We must then work to reconstruct equitable practices and in this regard, the importance of counter-narratives and storytelling as described in earlier chapters (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2000) is clear from this research. Students need to have their voices amplified, and teachers need to be able to hear them

and use them in their own classrooms. Implicit in the participants' interest in educating others is a belief that every part of a students' identity should be valued and celebrated. Teachers should be helping students to explore their own identity in all of its complexity and richness through reading and hearing the stories of others and telling their own. The power of the narrative to bridge gaps in understanding through emotional connections is unmatched.

Each student in this study mentioned the desire to learn more about themselves and others during their educational career.

Students also voiced the desire not only to learn about their own culture, but religions, cultures and peoples from around the world. They expressed a desire for a window into the diversity of human experience as well as an interest in the qualities and characteristics that bind us together as one human species. This is an essential element of a just society and increasingly necessary in our more globalized world. However as Kumashiro (2000) notes,

> changing oppression requires disruptive knowledge, not just more knowledge. Students need to learn that what is being learned can never tell the whole story, that there is always more to be sought out, and in particular, that there is always diversity in a group, and that one story, lesson or voice can never be representative of all. (pp. 34)

So then while inclusion of the experiences, histories, and literature that more closely reflects the diversity of the world is important and necessary, and should be integrated into the everyday curriculum, for education to be transformative, more is necessary. Personal and societal transformation of oppressive conditions must be the ultimate goal

(Bajaj, 2011; Kumashiro, 2000). Haneen exemplifies this in her attempt to create discussion and learning at her school through the establishment of a diversity week at her school. She explained that through the various activities that were planned by her leadership group, she was hopeful that,

> Kids might think a little more before they say things or do things that might harm others. And they might be able to see how a lot of these things that we are talking about are connected. Like, yeah, Islamophobia, but homophobia and women's rights and African-Americans, it's all connected. Kids need to see that.

This must also be connected to ways of knowing and learning that are more disruptive of oppressive practices and which educate students as Abu El-Haj (2006b) suggests, "not for political conformity and consent but to foster deliberation and dissent" (p. 16). Several of the students noted that while they would be interested in curriculum that focused on Arabs and Islam, they almost seemed frustrated at my questions about this. They were looking not just for specific curriculum, but for discursive practices that emphasized openness, listening, dialogue, and disruption. They wanted to learn not just about themselves, but about how to talk about themselves and others in a more open, productive and respectful way while still remaining part of a discussion that was interrupting dominance and challenging oppression of all kinds. Students wanted new curriculum, yes, but what they longed for was a transformation of the way the classroom functioned.

If there is to be a shift to more inclusive and transformative curriculum and pedagogy, there must also be significant changes to how we train pre-service teachers, how we support new teachers, and professional development for veteran teachers.

Teacher education programs need to move away from the model of a separate multicultural course (or courses) and toward the idea of integrating training in critical pedagogy and teaching for social justice and human rights across the curriculum and throughout the program. Pre-service teachers need to spend time practicing these critical pedagogies if they are to successfully implement them in their classrooms. New teachers need to be supported in these efforts by veteran teachers who are familiar with their practice and ultimately by administrators who understand their value. Veteran teachers need ongoing professional development that supports content-specific and grade level appropriate solutions for implementation of transformative pedagogies and practices. And like new teachers, they need support from administrators and policy-makers who understand the need for transformation of the educational space and who are willing to work together toward that goal. Students in this study asserted that it seemed like teachers wanted to do this but were limited by standards, curriculum or worries about "getting in trouble." As an educator who does worry about these things, I think this is part of the issue. Institutional structures of education must be changed to allow teachers to do what many are already doing and what many more would be willing to do if they did not fear reprisals.

But more than this, we need to fundamentally shift the way we view education as a discrete set of knowable items. Education needs to be what Freire (1978) called liberatory. It needs to be focused on the transformation of the self as well as society (Bajaj, 2011). Just as Haneen expressed her hope that she would learn a lot from her diversity week experience, she also looked forward to a time when oppression was a thing of the past. And though she was optimistic, she was also realistic,

> It's slow. It's a slow process. You can't tell someone who's ignorant they're ignorant. You have to show them. So I think the best way would be for people…it's a process. It took awhile to brainwash these people, it's going to take awhile to un-brainwash them. So it's basically just good people going out there and doing good things.

Conclusions

Islamophobia is a clear problem that negatively impacts the ways in which Palestinian-American youth define their own identity and American citizenship. As discussed previously, these students had understandably internalized to varying degrees some of the dominant narratives about Palestinian culture being essentially in conflict with American culture. As Abu El-Haj (2007) states, this is a direct result of the overwhelmingly negative messaging that has permeated American culture and institutions as well as the ways in which communities of color have been excluded from the privileges of White supremacy. This can lead to a conflictual identity (Sirin & Fine, 2008), which is evident in many of the students in El-Haj's study.

By contrast, the students in this research acknowledged both their privileged position as American citizens and the ways in which this privilege separated them from Palestinians still living under occupation. However while students in this study certainly encountered overt racism, especially from the culture at large, many of the more common incidents they described would more accurately be labeled microaggressions (Sue et. al, 2007). The *micro* in microaggressions might imply that these attacks are unimportant and without consequence, but this is far from the truth. In many ways microaggressions are more insidious because they are often hidden in coded language and more likely to be

shrugged off by all involved as curiosity or just jokes. The damage is much harder to see and more difficult to unpack. This is why students and teachers need to work on the development of critical consciousness and engage in constant reflection and action toward equitable change (Freire, 1970). The human rights education framework (Tibbits, 2005) that provides students and teachers with the language to describe the challenges they work to change and the triumphs they achieve has promise in the work of liberation.

While the students I interviewed lamented the ways in which Islamophobia impacted their own lives and they wished that American culture, the media and their own communities and schools more accurately reflected the realities of Palestinian-American life, their greater wish was for all people to be accepted and valued, for all human beings to be able to live in dignity and safety. They wanted to learn about not only themselves, but other people and places around the world. They wanted to grapple with big questions and engage in meaningful dialogue with a diverse group of people with varying backgrounds and experiences both in and out of school. They didn't just want to think about themselves, but saw themselves as part of a larger group of oppressed people who are rendered invisible or portrayed in one-dimensional ways and several wanted to work to change this. Ultimately, as educators, we must work with our students within our sphere of influence, not only as teachers but as citizens to challenge the dominant discourse which supports Islamophobia and other forms of oppression and work to dismantle and transform it into a culture based on equity, justice and love. This may seem a daunting task, and I am by no means suggesting it is not, but as the alternative is to accept things as they are, I choose to work for change. I also prefer to think about

revolutionary change as Nelson Mandela did when he paraphrased Pliny the Elder, "It always seems impossible until it's done."

References

Abo-Zena, M.M., Sahli, B. & Tobias-Nabi, C.S. (2009). Testing the courage of their Convictions: Muslim youth respond to stereotyping, hostility and discrimination in O. Sensoy & C.D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (3-26). Boston: Sense Publishing.

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2006a). Imagining postnationalism: Arts, citizenship education, and Arab American youth. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 40(1),* 1-19.

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2006b). Race, politics, and Arab American youth: Shifting frameworks for conceptualizing educational equity. *Educational Policy, 20(1), 13-34.*

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2007). "I was born here, but my home, it's not here": Educating for democratic citizenship in an era of transnational migration and global conflict. *Harvard Educational Review, 77(3),* 285-317.

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2009a). Becoming citizens in an era of globalization and transnational migration: Re-imagining citizenship as critical practice. *Theory Into Practice, 48,* 274-282.

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2009b). Imagining postnationalism: Arts, citizenship education, and Arab American youth. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 40(1),* 1-19.

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2011). Education, citizenship, and the politics of belonging: Youth from Muslim transnational communities and the "War on Terror." *Review of Research in Education, 35, 29-59.*

Abu El-Haj, T.R. (2015). *Unsettled belonging: Educating Palestinian American youth after 9/11.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Abukhattala, I. (2004). The new bogeyman under the bed: Image formation of Islam in the Western school curriculum and media in Kincheloe, J.L. & Steinberg, S.R. (Eds.). *The miseducation of the West: How schools and the media distort our understanding of the Islamic world* (153-170). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Abunimah, A. (2006). *One country: A bold proposal to end the Israeli-Palestinian impasse*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Al-Awda—The Palestine Right to Return Coalition. (2015). *Factsheet on Palestinian refugees.* Retrieved February 17,2015, from http://al-awda.org/learn-more/factsheet-on-palestinian-refugees/

AAIF—Arab American Institute Foundation. (2011). *Arab American Institute Foundation.* Retrieved on February 17, 2015, from http://b.3cdn.net/aai/6dc54b3d39145166e6_p8m6iiixh.pdf

AROC—Arab Resource and Organizing Center. (2015). *Our work.* Retrieved on March 3, 2015, from http://araborganizing.org/our-work/community-organizing/

Assaf, N. (2003) The Bridge in *Live from Palestine: International and Palestinian direct action against the Israeli occupation* in Stohlman, N. & Aladin, L. Eds. Caimbridge, Mass.: South End Press.

Badil Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights. (2015). *Israel and the nakba.* Retrieved on February 17, 2015, from http://www.badil.org/en/israel-and-the-nakba

Bajaj, M. (2011). Teaching to transform, transforming to teach: exploring the role of teachers in human rights education in India. *Educational Research, 53*(2), 201-221. doi: 10.1080/00131881.2011.572369

Barghouti, O. (2011). *BDS: boycott, divestment, sanctions: The global struggle for Palestinian rights*. Chicago, Ill.: Haymarket Books.

Battalora, J. (2013). *Birth of a White nation: The invention of White people and its relevance today.* Houston, TX: Strategic Book Publishing.

Bayoumi, M. (2008). *How does it feel to be a problem? Being young and Arab in America.* New York: Penguin Books.

Bell, D. (1989). *And we are not saved: The elusive quest for racial justice.* New York: Basic Books.

Bisharat, G. (2012). In Israeli legal system, justice for Palestinians is lacking – latimes.com. *Los Angeles Times - California, national and world news latimes.com*. Retrieved March 8, 2012, from http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-bisharat-adnan20120307,0,5930547.story

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2014). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America* (4th ed.). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

B'Tselem. (2009). World water day—22 March—waters that cross borders. *B'Tselem: The Israeli information center for human rights in the Occupied Territories.* Retrieved from http://www.btselem.org/water/20090322_international_water_day

CAIR—Council on American-Islamic Relations. (2015). *Council on American-Islamic relations.* Retrieved on February 17, 2015 from http://www.cair.com/

Camarrotta, J. (2009). The generational battle for curriculum: Figuring race and culture on the border. *Transforming Anthropology,* 17(2), 117-130.

Chang, R. (1993). Toward an Asian American legal scholarship: Critical race theory, post-structuralism, and narrative space. *California Law Review, 81,* 1243.

Cook, C., Hanieh, A. & Kay, A. (2004). *Stolen youth: The politics of Israel's detention of Palestinian children.* London: Pluto Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Delgado Bernal, D. (2002). Critical race theory, Latcrit theory and critical raced-gendered epistemologies: Recognizing students of color as holders and creators of knowledge. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8*(1), 105-126.

Delpit, L. D. (1995). *Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom.* New York: New Press.

Defence for Children International. (2012). *Bound, blindfolded and convicted: Children held in military detention.* Ramallah: Defence for Children International Palestine Section.

Dictionary.com. (2015). *Dictionary.* Retrieved on April 7, 2015 from http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/neoliberal

DuBois, W.E.B. (1935). Does the Negro need separate schools? *The Journal of Negro Education, 4*(3), 328-335.

Duncan-Andrade, J. & Morrell, E. (2008). *The art of critical pedagogy: Possibilities for moving from theory to practice in urban schools.* New York: Peter Lang.

Elmuti, D. (2013). We must never forget the massacre in Deir Yassin. *Electronic Intifada.* Retrieved from http://electronicintifada.net/content/we-must-never-forget-massacre-deir-yassin/12341

Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth.* New York: Grove Press.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Seabury Press.

Ghaffar-Kucher, A. (2012). The religification of Pakistani-American youth. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(1), 30-52. doi: 103102/0002831211414858

Ginwright, S.A. (2000). Identity for sale: The limits of racial reform in urban schools. *The Urban Review, 32*(1), 87-103.

Gonzalez, J. (2011). *Harvest of empire: A history of Latinos in America.* New York: Penguin Books.

Gottschalk, P., & Greenberg, G. (2008). *Islamophobia: Making Muslims the enemy.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gramsci, A. (2014). *Selections from the prison notebooks.* New York: International Publishers.

Gualtieri, S. (2001). Becoming "White": Race, religion and the foundations of Syrian/ Lebanese ethnicity in the United States. *Journal of American Ethnic History,* 29-58.

Haney-Lopez, I. (1996) *White by law: The legal construction of race.* New York: New York University Press.

Harter, L.M, Scott, J.A., Novak, D.R., Leeman, M. & Morris, J.F. (2006). Freedom through flight: Performing a Counter-Narrative of Disability. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 34*(1), 3-29.

hooks, b. (1996). *Reel to real: Race, sex, and class at the movies*. New York: Routledge.

Human Rights Watch. (2015). *World Report 2015: Israel/Palestine*. Retrieved on February 17, 2015, from http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2015/country-chapters/israel-and-palestine?page=1

ICAHD—Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. (2015). *Get the facts.* Retrieved on April 2, 2015, from http://www.icahd.org/the-facts

Imam, S.A. (2009). Separation of what and state: The life experiences of Muslims with public schools in the Midwest in O. Sensoy & C.D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (41-54). Boston: Sense Publishing.

IMEMC Staff. (2014). Cousin of 16-year-old Who Was Burned to Death by Israeli Extremists. *International Middle East Media Center RSS*. Retrieved September 17, 2014, from http://www.imemc.org/article/68430

International Humanitarian Law - Fourth 1949 Geneva Convention. (1949). *International Committee of the Red Cross*. Retrieved March 8, 2012, from http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/FULL/380?OpenDocument.

Jewish Virtual Library. (2015). *A definition of Zionism.* Retrieved on February 24, 2015, from http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/zionism.html.

Johnston, C., & Khomami, N. (2014). Gaza protests: Rallies in UK and around the world call for end of conflict. *The Observer*. Retrieved September 5, 2014, from http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/aug/09/gaza-protest-march-london-raise-funds-victims-conflict-israel-palestine

Kantor, H. & Brenzel, B. (1992). Urban education and the "truly disadvantaged": The historical roots of the contemporary crisis, 1945-1990. *Teachers College Record, 94*(2), 278-314.

Khalidi, W. (2006). *All that remains: The Palestinian villages occupied and depopulated by Israel in 1948.* Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies.

Khan, C. A. (2009). On being us *and* them: A voice from the edge in O. Sensoy & C. D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (153-168). Boston: Sense Publishing.

Kozol, J. (2005). *Shame of the nation: The restoration of apartheid schooling in America.* New York: Three Rivers Press.

Kumashiro, K. K. (2000). Toward a theory of anti-oppressive education. *Review of Educational Research,* 70(1), 25-53.

Kyle, C., McEwan, S. & DeFelice, J. (2013). *American sniper: The auto-biography of the most lethal sniper in U.S. military history.* New York: Harper.

Ladson-Billings, G. & Tate, W. (1995). Toward a critical race theory of education. *Teachers College Record,* 97(1), 47-68.

Lee, S. (2005). *Up against whiteness: Race, school and immigrant youth.* New York: Teacher's College Press.

Lein, Y & Cohen-Lifshitz, A. (2005). *Under the guise of security: Routing the separation barrier to enable the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank.* Jerusalem: Bimkom and B'Tselem.

Levinson, C. (2012). Israeli government spend NIS 1.1 billion on settlements in 2011, reports show. *Haaretz.* Retrieved from http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/israeli-government-spent-nis-1-1-billion on-settlements-in-2011-reports-show-1.454790

Levitt, P. (2004). Redefining the boundaries of belonging: The institutional character of transnational religious life. *Sociology of Religion, 65*(1), 1-18.

Levy, G. (2012). Survey: Most Israeli Jews wouldn't give Palestinians the vote if the West Bank was annexed. *Haaretz.* Retrieved from http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/survey-most-israeli-jews-wouldn-t-give -palestinians-vote-if-west-bank-was-annexed.premium-1.471644.

Luyendijk, J. (2009). *People like us: misrepresenting the Middle East.* New York: Soft Skull Press.

Lynn, M. & Parker, L. (2006). Critical race studies in education: Examining a decade of research on U.S. schools. *The Urban Review, 38*(4), 257-290.

Maalouf, A. (2000). *In the name of Identity: Violence and the need to belong.* New York: Penguin Books.

Macedo, D. P. (2006). *Literacies of power: What Americans are not allowed to know* (Expanded ed.). Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.

Malek, A. (2011). *Patriot acts: Narratives of post 9/11 injustice.* San Francisco: McSweeney's.

Malek, C. & Hoke, M. (2014). *Palestine speaks: Narratives of life under occupation.* San Francisco: McSweeney's.

Mandela, N. (2001). It Always Seems Impossible Until It's Done. *Quote Investigator.* (2016, January 5). Retrieved February 21, 2016, from http://quoteinvestigator.com/2016/01/05/done/

Marshall, E. & Sensoy, O. (2011). *Rethinking popular culture and media.* Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Massey, D.S. & Denton, N.A. (1993). *American apartheid: Segregation and the making of the underclass.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

McGinnis, E. (Producer) & Palos, A. (Director). (2011). *Precious Knowledge.* [Motion Picture]. United States: Dos Vatos Productions.

Mearsheimer, J. J., & Walt, S. M. (2008). *The Israel lobby and U.S. foreign policy.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Milner, R.H. (2008). Disrupting deficit notions of difference: Counter-narratives of Teachers and community in urban education. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24,* 1573-1598.

Moraga, C., & Anzaldua, G. (1983). *This bridge called my back: Writings by radical women of color.* New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.

Morgan, P., Lorenz, R., Cooper, B., Lazar, A. & Eastwood, C. (Producers), & Eastwood, C. (Director). (2014). *American Sniper.* [Motion Picture]. United States: Warner Brothers.

Mossalli, N.N. (2009). The voice of a covered Muslim-American teen in a southern public school in O. Sensoy & C.D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (55-70). Boston: Sense Publishing.

Mourchid, Y. (2009). Left to my own devices: Hybrid identity development of religion and sexual orientation among Muslim students in the United States in O. Sensoy & C.D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (99-116). Boston: Sense Publishing.

Nasir, N.S. & Saxe, G.B. (2003). Ethnic and academic identities: A cultural practice perspective on emerging tensions and their management in the lives of minority students. *Educational Researcher, 32*(5), 14-18.

News24. (2014, March 10). Israel reminds me of apartheid-Tutu. Retrieved November 30, 2014, from http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/Israel-reminds-me-of apartheid-Tutu-20140310

Noguera, P. (2008). *The trouble with black boys...and other reflections on race, equity, and the future of public education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Olsen, L. (1997). *Made in America: Immigrant students in our public schools.* New York: The New Press.

Omi, M. & Winant, H. (2014). *Racial formation in the United States.* New York: Routledge.

Ong, A. (1996). Cultural citizenship as subject making: Immigrants negotiate racial and cultural boundaries in the United States. *Current Anthropology, 37,* 737-751.

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible citizenship: The cultural logics of transnationality.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Pappé, I. (2006). *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine.* Oxford: Oneworld.

Pappé, I. (2004). *A history of modern Palestine: One land, two peoples.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Paris, D. & Winn, M. (2014). *Humanizing research: Decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Paq, A. (2014). Portraits from Gaza. *The Electronic Intifada.* Retrieved September 17, 2014, from http://electronicintifada.net/content/portraits-gaza/13852

Qumsiyeh, M. B. (2011). *Popular resistance in Palestine: A history of hope and empowerment.* New York: Pluto Press.

Rolon-Dow, R. (2004). Seduced by images: Identity and schooling in the lives of Puerto Rican girls. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 35*(1), 8-29.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism.* New York: Vintage.

Said, E. W. (1997). *Covering Islam: How the media and the experts determine how we see the rest of the world* (Rev. ed., 1st Vintage Books ed.). New York: Vintage Books.

Said, E. W. (2000). *Out of place: A memoir.* New York: Vintage.

Sanchez, P. (2007). Urban immigrant students: How transnationalism shapes their world learning. *The Urban Review,* 39(5), 489-517.

Sarroub, L.K. (2001). The sojourner experience of Yemeni American high school students: An ethnographic portrait. *Harvard Educational Review, 71*(3), 390-415.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and social sciences* (3rd ed.). New York, New York: Teachers College Press - Columbia University.

Sensoy, O. (2009). Where the heck is the "Muslim World" anyways? in O. Sensoy & C. D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (169-183). Boston: Sense Publishing.

Sensoy, O. & DiAngelo, R. (2012). *Is everyone really equal? An introduction to key Concepts in social justice education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Sensoy, O. & Marshall, E. (2011). 'Save the Muslim girl!': Does popular young adult fiction about Muslim girls build understanding or reinforce stereotypes? in O. Sensoy & Marshall, E. (Eds.). *Rethinking popular culture and media* (120-135). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.

Shaheen, J. G. (2001). *Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people*. New York: Olive Branch Press.

Shaheen, J. G. (2008). *Guilty: Hollywood's verdict on Arabs after 9/11*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press.

Sharp, J. (2014, April 11). U.S. Foreign Aid to Israel. Retrieved November 21, 2014, from http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33222.pdf.

Sirin, S. R. & Fine, M. (2008). *Muslim American Youth: Understanding hyphenated identities through multiple methods.* New York: New York University Press.

Skalli, L. (2004). Loving Muslim women with a vengeance: The West, women and fundamentalism in Kincheloe, J.L. & Steinberg, S.R. (Eds.).*The miseducation of the West: How schools and the media distort our understanding of the Islamic world* (43-58). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Solorzano, D.& Bernal, D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and LatCrit theory framework: Chicana and Chicano students in an urban context. *Urban Education, 36*(3), 308-342.

Solorzano, D., Ceja, M., & Yosso, T. (2000). Critical race theory, racial microaggressions, and campus racial climate: The experiences of African American college students. *Journal of Negro Education*, 60-73.

Solorzano, D.G & Yosso, T.J. (2002). Critical race methodology: Counter-storytelling as an analytical framework for education research. *Qualitative Inquiry,* 8(1), 23-44.

Stohlman, N., & Aladin, L. (2003). *Live from Palestine: international and Palestinian direct action against the Israeli occupation*. Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press.

Stonebanks, C. D. (2009). If Nancy Drew wouldn't wear a hijab, would the Hardy boys wear a kufi? in O. Sensoy & C. D. Stonebanks (Eds.). *Muslim voices in school: Narratives of identity and pluralism* (169-183). Boston: Sense Publishing.

Stonebanks, C.D & Sensoy, O. (2011). Schooling identity: Constructing knowledge about Islam, Muslims and people of the Middle East in Canadian schools. *International Journal of Critical Pedagogy, 3*(3), 71-88.

Stop the Wall. (2015). Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign. Retrieved from http://stopthewall.org/

Suárez-Orozco, C. (2004). Formulating identity in a globalized world in Suarez Orozco, M.M. & Qin-Hilliard, D. B. (Eds.) *Globalization: Culture and education in the new millennium* (173-202). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C. & Suárez-Orozco, M. (2001). *Children of immigration.* Caimbridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Suárez-Orozco, C., Suárez-Orozco, M.M. & Todorova, I. (2008). *Learning a new land: Immigrant students in American society.* Caimbridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., Bucceri, C.M., Holder, A.M.B., Nadal, K.L., & Esqullin, M. (2007). Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice. *American Psychologist, 62(4),* 271-286.

Sue, D. W., Lin, A.I., Torino, G.C., Capodilupo, C.M., & Rivera, D.P. (2009). Racial microaggressions and difficult dialogues on race in the classroom. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 15(2),* 183-190.

Tabar, L. (2007). Memory, agency, counter-narrative: testimonies from Jenin refugee camp. *Critical Arts: A Journal of South-North Cultural Studies*, *21*(1), 6-31.

Takaki, R. T. (1993). *A different mirror: a history of multicultural America.* Boston: Little, Brown & Co.

Tatum, B.D. (1997). *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversations about race.* New York: Basic Books.

Tibbitts, F. (2005). Transformative learning and human rights education: Taking a closer look. *Intercultural Education, 16(2),* 107-113.

Tuck, E. & Yang, K. W. (2014) R-Words: Refusing research in D. Paris & M. T. Winn (Eds.). *Humanizing research: Decolonizing qualitative inquiry with youth and communities* (223-247). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Tuhiwai Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples.* London: Zed Books.

UN Daily News. (2014). *UN News Center*. Retrieved September 3, 2014, from http://www.un.org/News/dh/pdf/english/2014/22082014.pdf.

UN rights expert seeks access to Israel, occupied Palestinian territories for assessment mission. (2014, August 26). *UN News Center*. Retrieved September 5, 2014, from http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48560&Cr=Palestin&Cr1=#.VAoXfeC.

UN—United Nations—Welcome to the United Nations: It's your world. (2015). *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* Retrieved on February 24, 2015, from http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml.

UNGA—United Nations General Assembly—Question of Palestine. (2007). *Welcome to the United Nations: It's your world.* Retrieved May 2, 2012, from http://www.un.org/en/ga/62/plenary/palestine/bkg.shtml.

UNHCR—United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees—Key facts and figures. (2011). *Facts and figures about refugees.* Retrieved May 2, 2012, from http://www.unhcr.org.uk/about-us/key-facts-and-figures.html.

United States Census Bureau—American Fact Finder. (2010a). *Total population: Universe: Total population 2006-2010 American community survey selected Population tables: California: Arab.* Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_SF4_B01003&prodType=table.

United States Census Bureau—American Fact Finder. (2010b). *Total population: Universe: Total population 2006-2010 American community survey selected Population tables: San Mateo County, California: Arab.* Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_SF4_B01003&prodType=table.

United States Census Bureau—American Fact Finder. (2010c). *Total population: Universe: Total population 2006-2010 American community survey selected Population tables: San Mateo County, California: Palestinian.* Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_SF4_B01003&prodType=table.

United States Census Bureau—American Fact Finder. (2010d). *Total population: Universe: Total population 2006-2010 American community survey selected Population tables: United States: Palestinian.* Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_SF4_B01003&prodType=table.

United States Census Bureau—American Fact Finder. (2013a). *Selected population profile in the United States: 2013 American community survey 1-year estimates: United States: Arab.* Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_13_1YR_S0201&prodType=table

United States Census Bureau—American Fact Finder. (2013b). *Total population: Universe: Total population 2013 American community survey 1-year estimates: California.* Retrieved from http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_10_SF4_B01003&prodType=table.

UNRWA—United Nations Relief and Works Agency. (2015). *UNRWA: Who we are.* Retrieved on February 10, 2015, from http://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are.

UNRWA—United Nations Relief and Works Agency. (2015). *Resolution 194.* Retrieved on February 24, 2015, from http://www.unrwa.org/content/resolution-194.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring.* Albany, New York: State University of New York Press.

van Driel, B. (2004). *Confronting Islamophobia in Educational Practice.* Stoke on Trent, UK: Trentham Books.

Veracini, L. (2011). Introducing, settler colonial studies. *Settler Colonial Studies,* 1(1), 1-12. doi: 10.1080/2201473X.2011.10648799

Wing, A.K. (1997). *Critical race feminism: A reader.* New York: NYU Press.

Wolfe, P. (2006). Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native. *Journal of Genocide Research, 8*(4), 387-409.

Zinn, H. (2003). *A people's history of the United States: 1492-present.* New York: HarperCollins.

Appendix A: Student Consent Cover Letter

Dear Participant,

I am writing you to ask for your participation in a research project that I will conduct this summer. The research will contribute to my dissertation in the Doctoral Program at the University of San Francisco's School of Education. My research is focused on the ways in which Palestinian-American students develop these different parts of their identities. Your involvement would provide you with the opportunity to teach me about this process and possibly impact changes in the way schools and teachers support students in the future.

I am requesting your help by allowing me to interview you for one in-depth session and a follow-up interview. I would also like you to participate in a group discussion with other Palestinian-American students about your age. I would also like to provide you with the opportunity to review and check my findings and add any final suggestions at a dinner including all of the other participants. The interviews and group discussion would be at a time and place convenient for you and the other participants. The interviews will be digitally recorded. I will also ask your parent/guardian for their permission to allow you to participate.

Participation in this study may mean loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be taken to protect your identity. I will use pseudonyms rather than real names and all documentation will be accessible only by me. It is also possible that some of the questions about identity, religion and culture may make you feel uncomfortable. PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY. You may decline to participate in any or all parts of the study at any time.

While there will be no direct benefit to you from your participation in this study, the hope is that the results of the study will be used to make changes to the way schools and teachers support Palestinian-American students in the future. There will be no cost to you as a result of taking place in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. My cell number is 650-740-6567 and my email is kdelaneyrm9@gmail.com. You may also contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach IRBPHS office by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Should you be emotionally upset by anything as a result of this research project, and you feel that you need to talk to someone about it, free counseling services are available. The Daly City Youth Health Center provides free counseling services to youth and adolescents in Northern San Mateo County and is located at 2780 Junipero Serra Blvd. in Daly City. You can get information or schedule an appointment by calling (650) 985-7000 or by visiting their website at http://www.dalycityyouth.org/. Alternatively, the

Arab Cultural and Community Center in San Francisco runs a wellness program that also includes free counseling. They can be contacted through their wellness program director Sara Haj-Hassan at sara@arabculturalcenter.org or by calling (415) 664-2200 ext. 205.

I am deeply grateful for your generosity in helping me to learn about Palestinian-American students. My hope is to contribute to the field of education and your experience is very valuable.

Sincerely,

Kelly Delaney
Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco

Appendix B: Parent/Guardian Consent Cover Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing you to ask for your permission to allow your student, _____, to participate in a research project that I will conduct this summer. The research will contribute to my dissertation in the Doctoral Program at the University of San Francisco's School of Education. My research is focused on the ways in which Palestinian-American students develop the different parts of their identities while maintaining cultural traditions. Your student's involvement would provide them with the opportunity to teach me about this process and possibly impact changes in the way schools and teachers support students in the future.

I am requesting your help by allowing me to interview your student for one in-depth session and a follow-up interview. I would also like your student to participate in a group discussion with other Palestinian-American students about their age. I would also like to provide your student with the opportunity to review and check my findings and add any final suggestions at a dinner including all of the other participants. The interviews and group discussion would be at a time and place convenient for your student and the other participants. The interviews will be digitally recorded.

Participation in this study may mean loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be taken to protect your student's identity. I will use pseudonyms rather than real names and all documentation will be accessible only by me. It is also possible that some of the questions about identity, religion and culture may make your student feel uncomfortable. PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY. Your student may decline to participate in any or all parts of the study at any time.

While there will be no direct benefit to your student from their participation in this study, the hope is that the results of the study will be used to make changes to the way schools and teachers support Palestinian-American students in the future. There will be no cost to your student as a result of taking place in this study, nor will your student be reimbursed for their participation.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact me. My cell number is 650-740-6567 and my email is kdelaneyrm9@gmail.com. You may also contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach IRBPHS office by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Should your student be emotionally upset by anything as a result of this research project, and you feel they should talk to someone about it, free counseling services are available. The Daly City Youth Health Center provides free counseling services to youth and adolescents in Northern San Mateo County and is located at 2780 Junipero Serra Blvd. in Daly City. You can get information or schedule an appointment by calling (650) 985-7000 or by visiting their website at http://www.dalycityyouth.org/. Alternatively, the

Arab Cultural and Community Center in San Francisco runs a wellness program that also includes free counseling. They can be contacted through their wellness program director Sara Haj-Hassan at sara@arabculturalcenter.org or by calling (415) 664-2200 ext. 205.

I am deeply grateful for your generosity in facilitating my learning about Palestinian-American students. My hope is to contribute to the field of education and your student's experience is very valuable.

Sincerely,

Kelly Delaney
Doctoral Student
University of San Francisco

Appendix C: Student Informed Consent Form

Purpose and Background

Kelly Delaney is a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco's International and Multicultural Education Department. She is conducting a study about Palestinian-American student identity. I am being asked to participate in this study because I am a Palestinian-American student.

Procedures

If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:

1. I will participate in an interview with Kelly Delaney for one 2-3 hour session where I will discuss my identity as a Palestinian-American.
2. Kelly Delaney will facilitate a discussion group including myself and several other participants about my age lasting 60-90 minutes.
3. I will participate in a follow-up interview lasting 60-90 minutes with Kelly Delaney adding any additional information I think is missing.
4. I will participate in a final discussion dinner with Kelly Delaney and all of the participants where I will have the opportunity to review and check the information Kelly has collected about me.

All interviews and discussion groups will be digitally voice recorded for the purposes of ensuring accuracy.

Risk and/or Discomfort

I am aware that emotional discomfort may arise when discussing my Palestinian-American identity and my educational experiences. I understand I am free to decline to answer specific questions or to end my participation at any time. I will have the opportunity to read the transcriptions of my interview.

Should you be emotionally upset by anything as a result of this research project, and you feel that you need to talk to someone about it, free counseling services are available. The Daly City Youth Health Center provides free counseling services to youth and adolescents in Northern San Mateo County and is located at 2780 Junipero Serra Blvd. in Daly City. You can get information or schedule an appointment by calling (650) 985-7000 or by visiting their website at http://www.dalycityyouth.org/. Alternatively, the Arab Cultural and Community Center in San Francisco runs a wellness program that also includes free counseling. They can be contacted through their wellness program director Sara Haj-Hassan at sara@arabculturalcenter.org or by calling (415) 664-2200 ext. 205.

My identity will be confidential and I will be referred to in all documents using a pseudonym. Documents related to the observations and interviews will be secured and accessible only to Kelly Delaney. I understand she will make every effort to protect my identity. I understand that participation in this study may have the unintended consequence of a loss of confidentiality.

Benefits
The potential benefit for me is to share my experience as a Palestinian-American and my suggestions for schools and teachers as to how they could support students more effectively in the future.

Costs/Financial Considerations
There will be no financial costs to me as a result of taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement
There will be no payment or reimbursement for participation in this study.

Questions
If I have any questions, comments or concerns, I may email Kelly Delaney at kdelaneyrm9@gmail.com. I may call her on her cell phone at 650-740-6567.

If I have any questions or concerns about my participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the University of San Francisco's IRBPHS, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach IRBPHS office by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Consent
I have been given a copy of a cover letter and a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY. I understand that I may decline to participate in this study or withdraw at any time. My decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on my present or future status at schools in the San Bruno Park School District, the San Mateo Union High School District, or at the University of San Francisco.

My signature below indicates that I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix D: Parent/Guardian Informed Consent Form

Purpose and Background

Kelly Delaney is a doctoral student at the University of San Francisco's International and Multicultural Education Department. She is conducting a study about Palestinian-American student identity. My student is being asked to participate in this study because he/she a Palestinian-American student.

Procedures

If I agree to participate in this study, the following will happen:

1. My student will participate in an interview with Kelly Delaney for one 2-3 hour session where he/she will discuss his/her identity as a Palestinian-American.
2. Kelly Delaney will facilitate a discussion group including my student and several other participants about his/her age lasting 60-90 minutes.
3. My student will participate in a follow-up interview lasting 60-90 minutes with Kelly Delaney adding any additional information he/she thinks is missing.
4. My student will participate in a final discussion dinner with Kelly Delaney and all of the participants where my student will have the opportunity to review and check the information Kelly has collected about him/her.

All interviews and discussion groups will be digitally voice recorded for the purposes of ensuring accuracy.

Risk and/or Discomfort

I am aware that emotional discomfort may arise for my student when discussing his/her Palestinian-American identity and his/her educational experiences. I understand that my student is free to decline to answer specific questions or to end his/her participation at any time. My student will have the opportunity to read the transcriptions of his/her interviews.

Should your student be emotionally upset by anything as a result of this research project, and you feel they should talk to someone about it, free counseling services are available. The Daly City Youth Health Center provides free counseling services to youth and adolescents in Northern San Mateo County and is located at 2780 Junipero Serra Blvd. in Daly City. You can get information or schedule an appointment by calling (650) 985-7000 or by visiting their website at http://www.dalycityyouth.org/. Alternatively, the Arab Cultural and Community Center in San Francisco runs a wellness program that also includes free counseling. They can be contacted through their wellness program director Sara Haj-Hassan at sara@arabculturalcenter.org or by calling (415) 664-2200 ext. 205.

My student's identity will be confidential and will be referred to in all documents using a pseudonym. Documents related to the observations and interviews will be secured and accessible only to Kelly Delaney. I understand she will make every effort to protect my student's identity. I understand that participation in this study may have the unintended consequence of a loss of confidentiality for my student.

Benefits
The potential benefit for my student is to share his/her experience as a Palestinian-American and his/her suggestions for schools and teachers as to how they could support students more effectively in the future.

Costs/Financial Considerations
There will be no financial costs to me as a result of my student taking part in this study.

Payment/Reimbursement
There will be no payment or reimbursement for my student's participation in this study.

Questions
If I have any questions, comments or concerns, I may email Kelly Delaney at kdelaneyrm9@gmail.com. I may call her on her cell phone at 650-740-6567. If I have any questions or concerns about my participation in this study, I should first talk with the researcher. If for some reason I do not wish to do this, I may contact the University of San Francisco's IRBPHS, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. I may reach IRBPHS office by emailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu.

Consent
I have been given a copy of a cover letter and a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY IS VOLUNTARY. I understand that I may decline to allow my student to participate in this study or withdraw at any time. My decision as to whether or not to allow my student to participate in this study will have no influence on his/her present or future status at schools in the San Bruno Park School District, the San Mateo Union High School District, or at the University of San Francisco.

My signature below indicates that I agree to allow _____ to participate in this study. (print student name)

_____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

_____

Researcher's Signature Date